Problems of Communism

JULY–AUGUST 1975

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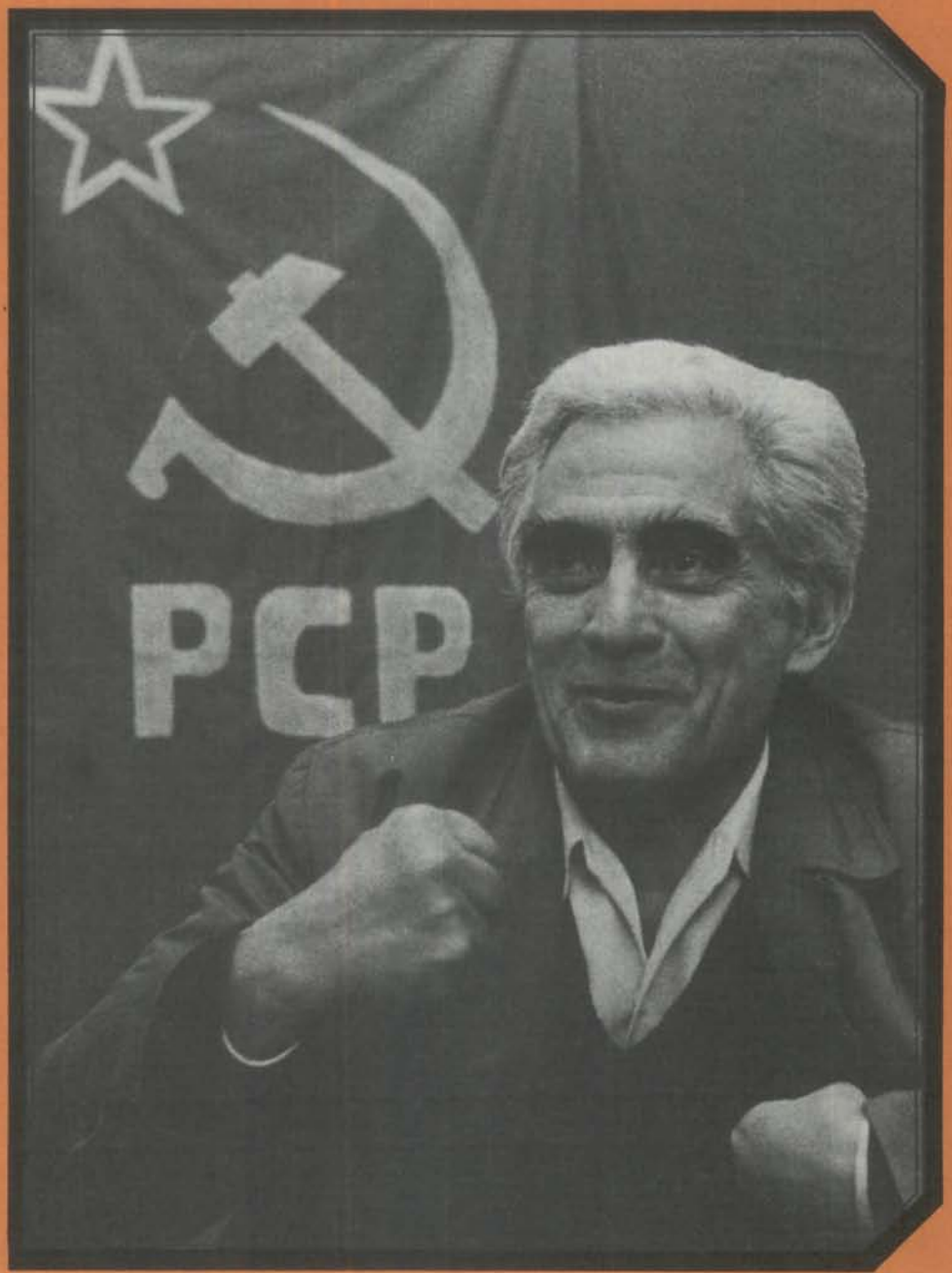

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Problems of Communism

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JULY-AUG 1975 VOL XXIV

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Cover: Alvaro Cunhal, Secretary-General of the Communist Party of Portugal. Photo by Jean Guyaux.

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The Rise of Portugal's Communists

By Arnold Hottinger

On April 30, 1974, five days after the successful armed forces uprising against the regime of Marcello Caetano, the Secretary General of the Communist Party of Portugal, Alvaro Cunhal, returned to Lisbon from exile abroad. Officially he came "from Paris," but those in the know were aware that he had only changed planes there and had actually begun his journey from Prague.

To greet the returning Communist leader, small groups of party members, with banners indicating their places of origin, had been brought to the airport from the industrial sections of greater Lisbon and from outlying districts south of the Tajo River. In addition, inscriptions on the walls of city buildings had urged the general populace to go to the airport and join in the welcome. However, the name Alvaro Cunhal was still unknown to many Portuguese, and fewer than 2,000 turned out for the occasion.

The Army had sent several truckloads of security troops, and there were also some light tanks standing by. After the plane's arrival, there was a moment of tension when the tanks advanced toward the crowd of welcomers blocking the area in front of the closed glass doors of the airport lobby. But the party members had been ordered to treat the soldiers as friends, and on the initiative of their group leaders the waiting delegations broke into loud applause. The crowd joined in the applause and opened a path for the tanks to move up to the lobby entrance. Red flags were hoisted on the tanks, and girls handed out red carnations to the soldiers and bystanders.

Shortly thereafter, Cunhal—lean, sinewy, and extremely photogenic, with a furrowed face, white mane, and black eyebrows—emerged from the arrival lobby and was lifted onto a tank. While the crowd broke into wild applause, a few women sobbed in the background, overjoyed that their sons, exiled for many years, had returned with Cunhal.

In a brief speech, the Communist leader proposed a five-point program which, he said, was basic for the moment. The five points were: (1) to consolidate the gains achieved by the Armed Forces Movement (*Movimento das Forças Armadas*—MFA) and make them irreversible; (2) to secure full democratic freedom, including freedom for political parties; (3) to put an end to colonial wars; (4) to fulfill the most urgent needs of the workers; and (5) to guarantee free elections for a Constitutional Assembly. Cunhal also did not fail to pay full tribute to the MFA and its role in toppling the old regime.[1]

From that moment on, the PCP has been a major force in Portuguese politics—and at times has even appeared to be the most important one. It has managed to elevate its representatives and sympathizers to leading positions in the mass media. It has seized the initiative in the trade unions. It has succeeded in turning the Portuguese Democratic Movement (*Movimento Democrático Português*—MDP), which initially included all the democratic opposition parties, into a front group consisting only of its own allies and dominated by the party; and through the front it has secured an interim position

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[1] Speech reprinted in Alvaro Cunhal, ***A Revolução Portuguesa*** (The Portuguese Revolution), Lisbon, Publicações Dom Quixote, 1975, pp. 185 ff. This volume is a useful collection of Cunhal's speeches and interviews prior to and after the April 1974 revolution.

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of leadership in the local administrative structures (*Juntas de Freguesia,* or Municipal Councils). Perhaps most important of all, it has successfully established and maintained good relations with powerful elements in the MFA.

The Pre-1974 Role of the PCP

Most observers were amazed at the ability of the PCP to emerge from nearly five decades of underground existence and almost overnight begin to appear and act as one of the main political forces in Portugal. In part, this sudden rise to a major position of influence was achieved through the party's effective and simultaneous action in key sectors and at various levels of national life in the wake of the 1974 uprising. However, it was also due in large measure to the advantages the party enjoyed by virtue of its long and tenacious underground struggle against the successive regimes of Antonio de Oliveira Salazar and Marcello Caetano, which lent credibility to its claim to have been the main force responsible for the overthrow of the "fascist dictatorship." Hence, to understand the party's quick success, it is first necessary to look back at the history of its activities prior to the MFA's seizure of power.

Founded in 1921, the PCP was forced to go underground after only five years of existence following the 1926 military coup d'état by Gomes da Costa that led to the establishment of the Salazar

Alvaro Cunhal, Secretary-General of the Portuguese Communist Party, is helped onto a tank at the Lisbon airport after his return from exile on April 30, 1975.

—Henri Bureau/Sygma.

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dictatorship.[2] With its leaders either imprisoned or in exile, the party nevertheless began an unremitting campaign of clandestine opposition to the regime in the early 1930's and thereafter made repeated efforts to form a common front with all parties and groups whose aim it was to bring down the dictatorship. Until after World War II, however, these efforts remained largely ineffectual in the face of severe official repression of all political activities outside the single legally-recognized party organization, the National Union (*União Nacional*).

The postwar period afforded the party slightly greater leeway to pursue its efforts for a united anti-government front of democratic forces. In view of the World War II victory of the democracies, Salazar instituted a new electoral system which, though organized in such a way that the opposition could not win, did at least grant opposition groups limited freedom to criticize the government and conduct electoral propaganda during periods of a few weeks preceding presidential or National Assembly elections. The result of this unique system was that the opposition forces were periodically revived and given a temporary opportunity to raise their voices, albeit in a more or less muffled manner. The Communists, of course, were not allowed to participate as a party in these limited electoral activities and hence were obliged to work within the other opposition groups—democrats, liberals, old republicans, and socialists—whom they sought to draw into a common front. Nevertheless, they consistently played an important role in the various opposition fronts that came into being during the 1950's and 1960's.[3]

The high point of the opposition's efforts to bring down the Salazar regime by legal means was reached in the electoral campaign of 1958, in which the Communists joined with other opposition forces in supporting the presidential candidacy of General Humberto Delgado against the nominee of Salazar's National Union. Though defeated, Delgado came close enough to an electoral victory to cause Salazar to decide that henceforth the President should be chosen by an Electoral Assembly and only elections to the National Assembly, a mainly consultative body, would continue to be conducted by popular vote.

As time went on, a gradual change in the nature of the opposition tended to work to the Communists' advantage. The old republicans who had known the pre-1926 Portuguese Republic and wished to restore a similar system were increasingly replaced in the opposition ranks by a younger generation of Portuguese who had no personal experience of the republican period (1910-26) and whose image of democrary no longer derived from the Portuguese past but rather from the contemporary history of other European states. This new generation, embittered by the tyrannical character and methods of the Salazar and Caetano regimes, tended to gravitate toward the more extremist opposition tendencies, and these, according to the government itself, were to be found in the programs of the PCP and a few armed-action groups of the anarchist variety.[4]

Among the radical groups, the Communists were apparently feared most by Salazar's secret police (the *Policia Internacional de Estado,* or PIDE), which aimed its most brutal and severe measures of repression against them. Paradoxically, however, this very fact tended to enhance the prestige of the Communists among the underground forces of opposition, especially in the eyes of the younger elements. Thus, during the 1960's, the PCP came to be looked upon as the backbone of the opposition against "fascism," and it was able to influence extensively—and to a certain degree to maneuver—the groups and parties cooperating with it.[5]

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[2] Salazar became Finance Minister (with extraordinary powers) in 1928 and assumed the premiership in 1932, holding the latter position continuously until 1968. Although the 1933 Constitution provided for a president elected every seven years, the presidency was relegated to a subordinate position under Premier Salazar, who held the real reins of power.

[3] On the role of the opposition under Salazar, see Hugh Kay, *Salazar and Modern Portugal,* London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1970, pp. 329-96, for a portrayal sympathetic to Salazar; and Mario Soares, *Le Portugal bailloné, un témoignage* (Muzzled Portugal, A Testimonial), Paris, Calmann-Lévi, 1972, for the viewpoint of the opposition.

[4] The latter included the League of Union and Revolutionary Action (LUAR), organized by left-wing Army officers in 1966, and another extremist group calling itself Armed Revolutionary Action (ARA).

[5] Since April 1974, the Communists have published an abundance of literature concerning their underground struggle and martyrs. Some titles are: *A Defesa Acusa, Os comunistas portugueses perante a policia e os tribunais fascistas* (The Defense Accuses. Portuguese Communists Before the Police and the Fascist Courts), Lisbon, Edições Avante, 1975, containing statements made by 15 Communists on trial before Salazar's and Caetano's courts; José Dias Coelho, *A Resistencia em Portugal* (The Resistance in Portugal), Porto, Editorial Inova, 1974, a new edition of a publication originally written underground; and several paperbacks—Aida Paula, *Com a certeza de quem vencer* (With the Certainty of One Who Will Win); Domingos Fernandes de Carvalho, *Luta de Corticeiros* (Struggle of the Cork Collectors); and A.A. Tereso, *Fuga de Caxias no carro blindado de Salazar* (Flight from Caxias in Salazar's Armored Car)—all published as part of a series entitled *Episodios da Resistencia Antifascista contados por quantos a viveram* (Episodes of Anti-Fascist Resistance Told by Those Who Survived), Lisbon, Ediciones sociais, 1974.

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In the late 1960's, disunity developed in the opposition camp between the Communists and the Democratic Socialists led by Mario Soares. During the campaign period preceding the 1969 National Assembly elections, the two groups failed to come to an electoral understanding and consequently went into the elections with separate lists of candidates: one put forward by a Communist-led electoral front, the Democratic Electoral Commission (*Commissão Democrática Eleitoral*—CDE); the other, by the Democratic Socialist-controlled front, the Electoral Commission of Democratic Union (*Commissão Eleitoral de União Democrática*—CEUD).[6] Soares, however, was subsequently forced into political exile as part of a renewed crackdown on opposition party activities, and by the time the 1973 Assembly elections took place, unity had been restored in the opposition camp with the CDE clearly in command.[7] As observers noted even then, the CDE was to a large extent directed by the PCP.[8]

The Communists' long record as a leading force in the underground opposition to the Salazar and Caetano regimes unquestionably placed them in an advantageous position when they were restored to legality following the MFA's seizure of power in April 1974. Their old associations with "all democrats" provided them with numerous valuable points of contact and influence in the new regime. In particular, they had close connections with the group of left-oriented Christians and Marxist economists around Francisco Pereira de Moura, who was later to become a Minister Without Portfolio in the first government completely instituted by the MFA (in March 1975), and with Mario Murteira, who became Minister of Economic Coordination. The former had headed the CDE list of candidates in the electoral campaigns of both 1969 and 1973.

Mario Soares, leader of the Portuguese Socialist Party, on the morrow of the April 1975 elections in Portugal.

—Bo Bojesen/Photoreporters.

The Communists' leading position within the general democratic opposition also proved of great value in enabling them to gain a strong initial foothold in the machinery of local government following the overthrow of the old regime. Under Salazar and Caetano, the municipal councils and other local government organs had been thoroughly dominated by members of the single state party (the National Union, renamed Popular National Action in 1970). Following the MFA's seizure of power, however, these officials were purged *en masse* and replaced by provisional municipal presidents and municipal commissions drawn chiefly from the ranks of the democratic opposition, organized as the Portuguese Democratic Movement/Democratic Electoral Commission (*Movimento Democrático Portugués/Commissão Democrática Eleitoral*—MDP/CDE). As a major element within the MDP/CDE, the Commu-

[6] On the disagreement between Soares and the Communists preceding the 1969 elections, see Soares, *op. cit.*, p. 245, and the documentary volume cited there: *As Eleiçoes de Outubro de 1969* (The Elections of October 1969), Lisbon, Publ. Europa America, 1970, especially pp. 63 ff.

[7] On the platform of the opposition in the 1973 elections and especially the relationship of the opposition to the Armed Forces Movement, see Avelino Rodrigues, Cesario Borga, and Mario Cardoso, *O Movimento dos Capitães e o 25 de Abril* (The Captains' Movement and the 25th of April), Lisbon, Morães editores, 1974, chap. 4. The 1973 theses of the opposition have appeared in a four-volume publication: *3º Congresso da oposição democrática, Aveiro, 4 a 8 de Abril de 1973* (The Third Congress of the Democratic Opposition, Aveiro, April 4-8, 1973), Lisbon, Seara Nova, 1974. For the positions of the opposition in all elections from 1945 through 1973, see *Eleições Legislativas, Subsidios para a historia da vida portuguesa, 1945-1973* (Legislative Elections, Supplements for the History of Portuguese Life, 1945-1973), Lisbon, Edições Delfos, 1973 (first published underground).

[8] See the following reports by the author published in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (Zurich): "Election Preparations in Portugal," June 30, 1973; "The Portuguese Opposition Is Losing Its Patience," Aug. 22, 1973; and "Further Polarization in Portugal," Nov. 4, 1973.

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nists were awarded a substantial share of these local government appointments.

In addition to these advantages, the Communists benefited from an already strongly-entrenched position in the labor unions, where they had constantly worked to keep alive labor opposition to the corporative state of Salazar and Caetano and to infiltrate the union leaderships. Under Salazar, the latter efforts had met with only slight success because union heads, though elected by the union members, had to be confirmed in their posts by the state, and confirmation was withheld whenever the state authorities suspected an elected person of being a Communist or a Communist sympathizer. After Caetano succeeded Salazar in 1968, however, the regulations were not as consistently enforced, and this enabled the Communists to gain control of the leadership of many of the unions.

In 1969, the Communists attempted to solidify their position further through the establishment of an Interunion Commission (*Commissão Intersindical*) largely dominated by pro-Communist elements, which they tried to utilize for the purpose of mobilizing the unions against the Caetano regime .The commission was then proscribed by the government on the ground that it was heavily infiltrated by the Communists, but the PCP nevertheless kept it operating underground and openly reestablished it immediately after the 1974 uprising. It was then given the title of Provisional Interunion Commission because its members were not elected; instead, they were designated from among union leaders on whom the party could rely, thus ensuring continued Communist control.

The situation in the information media was again one that the Communists were in an advantageous position to exploit in the wake of the 1974 upheaval, and here, too, the causes were partly rooted in the past. Over the long period of dictatorship, extreme dissatisfaction had developed among journalists and others in the press, radio, and television as a result of the rigid official controls imposed on the media. Outside of a few commercial radio stations, both radio and television had been pure state monopolies, while the media generally had been subjected to an official censorship that was petty, spiritually deadening, and regarded as scandalous and oppressive even by journalists not opposed to the regime. Moreover, there was no recourse against the censorship because it was exercised by a commission of censors whose identities the media were officially not supposed to know.

Having frequented journalistic circles in Portugal for years under the old regime, this writer can attest that the censorship aroused among those working in the media—and indeed among intellectuals generally—a resentment of the system that was only matched by the hatred directed at the state secret police. It also created sharp tensions within the media between the middle-level and younger writers and reporters, many of whom were neither reconciled to the existing regime nor corrupted by official favors, and the publishers and media executives, who generally were. The accumulated anti-regime sentiments of the mid-level and younger professionals were such that these personnel tended increasingly to lean toward the more radical opposition groups, including the Communists.

The MFA uprising finally released these pent-up feelings, and at the same time a vacuum was created by a sweeping purge of top-level media executives tainted by their close association with the old regime. Those who had until then been mid-level professionals, and who for the most part had by now become converted to some form of leftist ideology, whether moderate or extremist, set up new editorial boards that assumed *de facto* authority to set the political line to be followed. In many cases, moreover, they were backed up by shop committees of printing and technical workers that were under Communist control.

Communist Influence in the MFA

All the factors described above helped the Communists to achieve their rise to major influence in Portuguese politics following the April 1974 uprising, but the party would hardly have been able to make such rapid progress and would have found its early gains far less easy to consolidate if it had not also been able to count on significant support within the Armed Forces Movement itself, the prime mover in the final overthrow of the old regime. It was the MFA that commanded the weapons and therefore the decisive power.

This poses the question of the extent to which the Communists had managed to win covert adherents within the MFA prior to the 1974 uprising. Evidence is admittedly lacking to prove that individual officers who played important roles in the MFA were secret members or supporters of the PCP. However, there *is* evidence which suggests that Communist ideas had substantially influenced

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the thinking of important segments of the military, particularly the younger, middle-grade officers who constituted the real driving force in the MFA.

One significant indication is that the "Program of the Armed Forces," drawn up just before the uprising and published immediately afterward,[9] appeared to be based on some of the same fundamental concepts embodied in the 1965 program of the PCP [10] (still in force in April 1974) and in the programs put forward by the Communist-led opposition front (CDE) in the pre-electoral campaigns of 1969 and 1973. For example, the MFA program called for an "anti-monopolistic" economic policy, echoing the 1965 PCP program's call for "liquidation of the monopolies." More important, on the subject of the future character of the Portuguese state, the MFA program envisaged a transition to "democracy," and it became clear after the uprising that some of the revolutionary officers who drew up the program interpreted "democracy" to mean something close to the PCP's conception of it.

These points of convergence between the ideas of the revolutionary officers and those of the PCP are not surprising in view of the known fact that some of their leaders, who were to become members, first, of the powerful Coordinating Commission of the MFA and, later, of the Revolutionary Council which became Portugal's highest decision-making body in March 1975, had contacts—initially occasional and then systematic—with leaders of the underground democratic opposition, who in turn were in close touch with members of the PCP.[11]

Communist influence on the thinking of the revolutionary officers has been still more clearly corroborated by the recent disclosure by some of their leaders that certain points in the MFA program, as originally drafted, encountered opposition from General Antonio de Spínola, head of the original military junta, to whom the draft program was presented for review just before the uprising.[12] The controversy involved, above all, the question of Portugal's African colonies, with Spínola insisting on "self-determination," while the revolutionary officers were already thinking in terms of "immediate independence," as called for in the program of the PCP. Similarly, Spínola insisted that the term "fascists," which had been used in the draft program *and* in most PCP statements with reference to the Salazar/Caetano regime, be deleted. Spínola, who was then in the driver's seat, had his way, but the controversy was nonetheless revealing of the thinking of the revolutionary officers.

It should be noted here that the influence of radical-leftist ideas had become strong not only in the Army but even more so in the Navy, which came to be regarded following the April 1974 uprising as the "reddest" of the Portuguese armed services. This was apparently true not just among the noncommissioned ranks of seamen, most of whom stemmed from poor fishermen's backgrounds and had good reason to be dissatisfied with the existing social system, but among many of the officers as well. Commenting on this phenomenon in a May 1975 interview, Admiral Vitor Crespo, who had been Portuguese High Commissioner for Mozambique at the time of the uprising and later became a member of the Revolutionary Council, remarked:

In the Fleet we have developed these ideas for 15 years. . . . Books in foreign languages were never forbidden in Portugal. Under the old regime, whoever understood French or English could read any book he wanted.[13]

Crespo's statement appeared to confirm that radical leftist ideologies had been an important ingredient in the buildup of opposition within the Navy to the Salazar and Caetano regimes.

The PCP Since the Uprising

These, then, were the principal background factors that contributed to the Communists' immediate successes in the wake of the MFA's assumption of power. Now it is necessary to assess what the party has subsequently been able to accomplish by way of consolidating and extending its initial gains.

From the first, the PCP leadership recognized

[9] This document has been individually published as well as reproduced in many places. See, *e.g.*, Amadeo José de Freitas, *Setembro 28, a negra madrugada* (September 28, The Black Dawn), Lisbon, no publisher, 1973, pp. 18 ff.

[10] *Programa do Partido Comunista Português* (Program of the Portuguese Communist Party), Lisbon, Edições Avante, 1974. This program was first published underground in 1965, and a second underground edition was published in 1970.

[11] See Rodrigues *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 205 ff.

[12] Interview with three leading revolutionary officers—Colonel (now General) Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, Major Vitor Alves, and Captain Vasco Lourenço—broadcast on Portuguese television on April 25, 1975, first anniversary of the 1974 uprising; reprinted in *República* (Lisbon), May 7, 1975, pp. 13-14 and 18.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

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At a May Day 1975 rally in a Lisbon stadium, Portuguese President Costa Gomes stands at the microphones, with Prime Minister Vasco Gonçalves and Admiral José Pinheiro de Azevedo seated to his left and Communist chief Alvaro Cunhal standing with folded arms to his rear.

—Jean Guyaux.

that the party's future role depended above all on its ability to preserve collaborative relations with the Armed Forces Movement. Therefore, in line with its ideology, the party interpreted the MFA's main slogan, "Cooperation Between the People and the MFA," to mean that the PCP, as the self-proclaimed "representative of the people," should cooperate as closely as possible with the military leadership, and the party has consistently hewed to that line ever since. For a party which had spent most of its existence underground and most of whose leaders had suffered years of imprisonment, exile, and police persecution,[14] such a course offered not only the best guarantee of future security but also the best means of achieving political influence. The party leaders have consequently made a systematic effort to conform to the will and wishes of the MFA. This would not have been possible, however, had it not been for the points of convergence noted earlier between the ideas of the PCP and the thinking of a large number of the revolutionary officers.

In any case, the MFA leadership has taken practically no initiatives or decisions that have not received immediate approbation and praise from the PCP and its political front, the MDP/CDE. The other revitalized democratic parties—*i.e.*, the Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista*—PS), and the Popular Democratic Party (*Partido Popular Democrático*—PPD)—have occasionally tried to oppose or argue with the officers, but the PCP has so far carefully avoided doing so. This strategy has by and large proven highly beneficial to the party. Through its close collaboration with members of the military

[14] Cunhal himself spent 14 years in prison, seven of them in total isolation, while other members of the party Central Committee served sentences ranging up to 20 years. Cunhal's escape from the Peniche prison in 1970 together with some of his comrades is one of the epics of the party. On this episode, see report by Marcel Niedergang originally published in *Le Monde* (Paris), June 1974, as reprinted in Portuguese in *O 25 de Abril na imprensa estrangeira* (The 25th of April in the Foreign Press), Lisbon, Novos Cadernos d. Quixote, No. 20, 1974, pp. 117 ff.

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leadership,[15] the PCP has had repeated opportunities to influence the course of events and move them in the direction it desired. This has been evident not only at the national and local political levels but also in the struggles for control of the unions and the media.

On the political front, it became increasingly clear in the first few months of the military regime that the MDP/CDE, originally organized as a joint movement of all the democratic parties, was actually becoming a tool of the PCP. Some of the non-Communist groups withdrew to form their own separate parties, the already-mentioned Socialist Party and Popular Democratic Party. Thereafter, by order of the PCP, only those non-Communists who supported the party were allowed to remain in the MDP/CDE, and it became a typical Communist-led front designed to capture the votes of those reluctant to cast their ballots for candidates wearing the PCP label.

In order to make the MDP/CDE more useful as a political instrument, the PCP subsequently insisted that that organization be officially recognized as a party, which would entitle it not only to field its own candidates in future elections but also to be represented in the government. This demand was strenuously opposed by the PS and PPD, but the MFA leadership decided the dispute in the PCP's favor. This decision prompted many Portuguese to refer sarcastically to the front organization as the "No. 2 Portuguese Communist Party," and its showing in the April 1975 elections to the Constitutional Assembly, which will be dealt with in more detail later, proved unexpectedly poor: in spite of massive campaign propaganda, the front's candidates amassed only four percent of the total vote. Nevertheless, the decision of the military leadership helped the Communists not only to retain their entrenched position in the local government structure but also to gain control of the economic ministries in the provisional national government, giving the party a decisive voice in shaping future economic policy.

Election posters of the Portuguese Communist Party and its related front organization, the MDP/CDE, in Lisbon shortly before the April 25, 1975, national elections.

—Bo Bojesen/Photoreporters.

Military influence also helped the Communists in their efforts to consolidate their initial control of the union movement through the earlier-mentioned Provisional Interunion Commission. Toward the end of 1974, the PCP and the unions and union leaders allied with it began pressing for legal action by the government to authorize only a single union organization under the interim leadership of the Interunion Commission. This unreasonable demand encountered strong opposition from the Socialists and other democratic parties, and a bitter struggle ensued in January and February 1975 over the issue of *"Unidade-Unicidade,"* or unity vs. uniformity of the unions. Instead of a single union organization

[15] What connections there may be between individual members of the present Revolutionary Council and the PCP are not clear. General Vasco dos Santos Gonçalves, the present Prime Minister as well as a member of the Revolutionary Council, has occasionally been asked if he is a party member but has refused to answer the question (*e.g.*, see H.U. Kempski, "Are You a Communist, Mr. General?" an interview published in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* [Munich], March 25, 1975). Some significance may also attach to Gonçalves' reported role in connection with an abortive coup attempt against the Salazar regime in 1959. Then a captain, Gonçalves was reportedly among the group of military officers and civilians originally involved in the conspiracy but withdrew from it shortly before the coup attempt. His withdrawal came *after* the PCP had refused to join the conspiracy, evidently because it was unwilling to sign a pledge of obedience to the military junta that was to assume power if the coup was successful. (On this episode, see Rodrigues *et al., op. cit.*, pp. 166-70.) Other officers who have been reported to be close to the PCP include Colonel Varela Gomes, who once led a military rebellion at Beja on New Year's 1964; and Navy Vice Admirals Rosa Coutinho and Pinheiro de Azevedo. The same thing has been said, though probably with less reason, about General Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, who acted as "coordinator" of the original "April 25th Movement" and who, in addition to his membership on the Revolutionary Council, is currently Commander of COPCON (*Commando Portugal Continente*), the Army's internal security force.

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authorized by law, as demanded by the PCP, the Socialists and their allies pressed for freedom of association that could lead to a union federation at the highest level if the workers themselves wanted it. After much argument, the Communists again won the battle, with the majority of the Coordinating Commission of the MFA deciding in their favor.

Although the Socialists were given assurances that free and secret elections would be held within the unions and that in the future the central Interunion Commission would be chosen in further elections participated in by delegates of the unions, the Socialists were not satisfied with the outcome because they feared that the existing Provisional Interunion Commission, made up of nonelected members largely subservient to the PCP, would be able to "manipulate" future union elections and hence the entire union structure from top to bottom. The decree providing for the future Interunion Commission and ordering the holding of elections within 120 days in those unions that had not yet done so was finally issued on May 7, 1975.[16] This set the stage for a continuing struggle for influence within the now legally-established unified union structure between the Communists and their opponents, with the former apparently holding the whip hand.[17]

The struggle for control of the media has been even more intense, and here again the Communists —with the undisguised blessing of dominant elements in the MFA—have made remarkable advances. As noted earlier, predominantly leftist-oriented editorial boards had taken over *de facto* control of most of the printed media following the wholesale purge of the former publishers and top-level executives in the wake of the MFA uprising. The Communists then proceeded to organize party cells within the newspaper and publishing establishments with a view to gaining control of the editorial and administrative boards. Their success in this effort was evidenced by a growing number of instances in which "intellectual workers" unwilling to conform to the line prescribed by the Communists and backed up by their MFA allies were fired from their jobs by the decision of board "plenaries."

In the case of the national television and radio networks, which had already been under state management, the MFA itself intervened directly, setting up commissions which at first confined their activities to settling disputes but later took over actual editorial control. Because of their close ties with MFA officers, the Communists thereby gained a measure of influence over these media as well.

The visibly growing Communist influence over the media evoked strong protests from the Socialists and their democratic allies, who began pressing for government action to curb that influence. This touched off a five-month struggle over the terms of a proposed new press law, the promulgation of which was consequently held up until February 26, 1975. Although the law contained some provisions that were not to the Communists' liking, it nevertheless confirmed the broad authority of the editorial boards over the political line to be followed by their respective publications.[18]

The promulgation of the press law was followed almost immediately by another government action which benefited the Communists by making it more difficult for any kind of independent or opposition journal to survive. Under the old regime all except a few newspapers had been owned by the banks. Consequently, with the government's nationalization of the banks on March 11, 1975, these newspapers became property of the state. As a result, the only independent journals that remained were three non-bank-owned newspapers that had already been in the opposition under the Caetano regime: the Socialist-controlled *República,* headed by Raul Rego; *O Primeiro de Jenero,* published in the northern city of Porto; and the weekly *Expresso,* headed by Pinto Balsemão.

[16] See *Diario de Lisboa* (Lisbon), May 7, 1975.

[17] It should be noted, however, that the Communists have not always fared well in past elections within the unions. Normally there have been two lists of candidates: List A, composed of nominees sponsored by the Interunion Commission; and List B, representing those in opposition to it. In a number of instances, especially in the northern part of the country, the B lists—which frequently combine all elements opposed to the Communists, including Socialists as well as ultraleft groups such as Maoists, Trotskyists, and Anarchists—have won. This was the case in a March 1975 election in the union of bank employees in Porto, where the A list, headed by Avelino Gonçalves, an important member of the PCP and formerly a minister in the first provisional government, was defeated.

[18] Relevant parts of the law are quoted in Francisco S. Costa and Antonio P. Rodrigues, Eds., *O Caso República: Documentos, entrevistas, comentarios* (The Case of *República:* Documents, Interviews, and Commentaries), Lisbon, published by the editors, 1975, pp. 57-68. The Communists and extreme left groups were not satisfied with the law because it failed to give the printing workers, along with the editorial boards, a voice in determining editorial policy, and they have since been agitating for a new law that would do so. Some of the more radical MFA officers have supported this position. Notably, General Saraiva de Carvalho has been quoted as approving the printing workers' seizure of the Socialist newspaper *República* (about which more below) on the ground that "the workers had the right to expel the administrators and directors if they disagreed with the pro-Socialist orientation of the paper" (Lisbon report published in *Vanguardia* [Barcelona], July 13, 1975).

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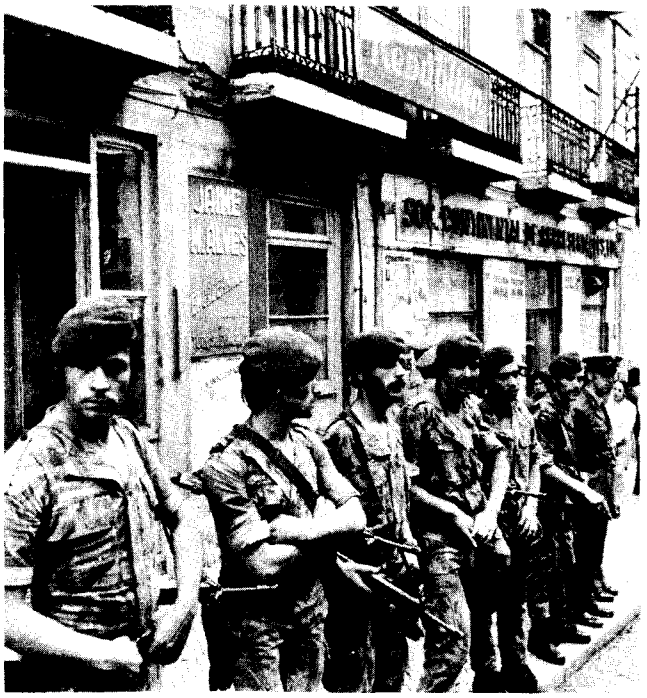
Following their striking success in the April 1975 elections to the Constitutional Assembly, the Socialists stepped up their fight against the Communists in the information field, demanding an end to what *República* denounced as "manipulation of the media." [19] Communist printers soon retaliated by seizing the newspaper's offices in the latter part of May, and when the Socialists attempted to regain control, Army paratroopers intervened, and *República* was closed down by order of the MFA.[20] Virtually the same process occurred in the case of a Catholic-operated Lisbon radio station.[21]

In all these areas, the PCP's ability to influence events to its own advantage by virtue of its collaboration with the MFA has been manifest. It becomes even more evident, however, when one looks at the three major crises that the MFA regime went through in the first year of its existence. As will be seen, each of these crises produced a further lurch to the left.

The Crisis of July 1974

The so-called "July crisis" of 1974 arose essentially out of the inability of the government of General Antonio de Spínola to hold together any longer because of internal conflict. There were two clearly divergent tendencies within the government: one representing the viewpoint of the revolutionary officers, *i.e.*, the former captains and majors who had sparked the April 1974 uprising; the other, the more moderate viewpoint of Spínola and his civilian and military supporters. Spínola commanded a majority in the then National Salvation Junta *(Junta de Salvação Nacional)*, and the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, Carlos Palma, was a man who had his confidence. On the other hand, the tendency of the revolutionary officers was represented in the government not only by several members of their group, who had their power center in the Coordinating Commission of the MFA and held the levers of command in the security forces of COPCON, but also by Alvaro Cunhal, head of the PCP, and Franciso Pereira de Moura, of the Communist-led MPD/CDE, both of whom held posts as Ministers without Portfolio.



Portuguese paratroopers ring the Communist-occupied offices of the newspaper República *on May 20, 1975, to guard it against possible attack by demonstrators demanding return of the premises to the Portuguese Socialist Party.*

—Wide World.

Conflicts between these two tendencies became increasingly acute over a variety of issues. There were conflicting interpretations of the MFA Program—a "bourgeois" interpretation and a "progressive" one—which envisaged quite different practical applications of the loosely-formulated items of the program. For example, what was meant by "democracy"—"bourgeois" democracy, "people's" democracy, or a "Third World" variety? Did the "anti-monopolistic" economic policy called for by the program require that prompt nationalization measures be adopted, or should the program's stipulation

[19] See Costa and Rodrigues, *op. cit.*

[20] As a result of this action, the Socialists suspended their participation in the government but subsequently returned after President Costa Gomes (according to a statement released by Socialist leader Mario Soares) had promised Soares that the case of *República* would be resolved "in accordance with the press law." This promise was not kept, and after long and futile negotiations on the newspaper's future, the MFA finally refused to permit its return to Socialist control and turned it over instead to the control of a military commission. As will be seen later, it was this action that precipitated the Socialists' final departure from the government.

[21] After workers had occupied the radio station, the Revolutionary Council first decided that the station should be returned to the control of the Catholic Church. However, the workers refused to evacuate the station, and COPCON units supported them instead of enforcing the Council's decision. The Council then backtracked on its earlier order and handed over the station to a military administrative commission. On this whole episode, see *Resistencia* (Lisbon), a conservative Catholic review, No. 104-05, June 30, 1975, especially pp. 48-49. The Church has refused to recognize the *fait accompli* resulting from the Revolutionary Council's action.

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that no "basic" decisions would be taken before the holding of constitutional elections take precedence?

Another important issue that was the subject of behind-the-scenes struggle was the decolonization of Portugal's African colonies. Spínola's intention was to hold authentic elections in the African territories whereby the local populations could decide their own destiny, and he took initial steps (for example, by opening contact with President Mobutu of Zaire) to isolate the left-extremist liberation movements which were demanding immediate independence. The revolutionary officers, on the other hand, insisted that the transition to independence should take place without delay, and that the only viable solution was a speedy transfer of power to the existing liberation movements, which in their view should be considered to represent the respective nations. According to one of these officers, the fact that the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique or FRELIMO and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola or MPLA (one of the three contending liberation movements in that country) were closely tied to the Soviet bloc was an impediment to handing over power to them in Spínola's opinion—but not in the eyes of the leftist officers.[22]

In July, the conflict within the government finally precipitated the resignation of Prime Minister Palma. Palma had drawn up a plan which called for postponement of the promised elections to a Constitutional Assembly and instead for the early holding of a popular election to choose a President. The intention behind the plan was to strengthen Spínola's position through his election as President by popular vote and to push the Army into the background. The leaders of the MFA, however, rejected the plan, and Palma was forced to resign. Spínola then tried to replace Palma with one of his own followers, Major Firminio Miguel, but the MFA also blocked this chess move. After four days of uncertainty, the until then little known Colonel (later General) Vasco dos Santos Gonçalves, a member of the MFA's Coordinating Commission, was installed as Prime Minister.

The July crisis was played out chiefly inside the government palaces, and the Communists had a role in it only through their two government Ministers without Portfolio. There is little doubt, however, that they made common cause with the leftist officers of the MFA, and that their political theses won the day.

The Crisis of September 1974

In the second crisis, the Communists played a much larger and more visible role because it took place to a large extent "on the streets." In the preceding weeks, Spínola had made active efforts to mobilize support among the "silent majority" of conservative Portuguese who feared a Communist takeover. As part of these efforts, a large-scale public demonstration of backing for Spínola was planned, and a massive propaganda campaign was mounted to get the conservative rural population of the areas surrounding Lisbon to participate in the demonstration. The Communists responded with a warning that a "reactionary conspiracy" was being prepared.[23] Then, on the day of the demonstration—with the aid of the Interunion Commission and, to some extent, of the Lisbon radio station and the privately-operated "Radio Clubs" broadcasting station—they mobilized their supporters to barricade the access roads into the capital and prevent the busloads of demonstrators from entering the city. This action by the PCP forced the MFA leadership to come out for or against Spínola, who demanded that action be taken to remove the barricades in the name of freedom of demonstration. Spínola also had police, who were loyal to him, occupy and silence the Lisbon radio station and the private "Radio Clubs" station, and he suspended publication of the daily newspapers, most of which were pro-Communist and were calling for maintenance of the barricades to block the "reactionary" demonstration. "Fascism shall not pass!" was the rallying cry of the leftist forces.

The real power struggle, however, took place among the military. Spínola called in Prime Minister Gonçalves and the Commander of COPCON, General Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, and ordered that they be held in custody in the Presidential Palace. He considered them both removed from office, but the commanders of individual Army units telephoned

[22] In an interview published in *O Seculo Illustrado* (Lisbon), May 3, 1975, Vice Admiral Rosa Coutinho claimed that Spínola wanted to eliminate the MPLA from Angola because, "as Spínola used to say, 'the MPLA takes orders from Moscow'." Coutinho added: "This was not language that could be permitted, nor a style and way of thinking acceptable after April 25th. Full of backward-looking Salazarism. . . ."

[23] See *A derrota de conspiração reaccionaria, Setembro 1974* (The Defeat of the Reactionary Conspiracy, September 1974), Cadernos do PCP No. 1, Lisbon, Edições Avante, 1974. This is a collection of articles, mainly from the PCP weekly *Avante*, and party statements.

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the Presidential Palace and threatened to march on it with their troops if Carvalho was not released and the pro-Spínola demonstration canceled. After some hesitation, General Francisco Costa Gomes, the Army Chief of General Staff, apparently decided to side with the MFA officers, who commanded the support of the majority of the military, possibly in order to avert a confrontation within the Army between Spínolist units and those supporting the MFA. The result was that Spínola was forced to release Prime Minister Gonçalves and the Commander of COPCON and to call off the demonstration by his supporters. Two days later he resigned as President in favor of Costa Gomes.[24]

The joint victory of the MFA and the Communist-led leftist forces was accompanied by a well-orchestrated and imaginative propaganda campaign waged by the largely Communist-controlled media. All kinds of unproved allegations were disseminated to the effect that the "reactionaries" had secretly stored weapons, planned assassinations, and conspired to bring down the MFA regime. There were arrests, but promised legal proceedings against the alleged conspirators have not even yet been instituted. After some weeks, Portuguese began to call what the official press referred to as an *intentona* (*i.e.*, a planned coup attempt) on the part of the reactionaries [25] as an *inventona* instead (from the word *inventar,* to invent).

Whether the Communists acted on their own initiative to block the pro-Spínola demonstration or were secretly encouraged to do so by their MFA supporters, there is no question that they played a major role in precipitating the September crisis and turning it to their political advantage. The question of power was decided among the MFA officers themselves, but it was the crisis caused by the Communists' barricade action that provided the leftist elements in the MFA leadership with the opportunity to bring the decisive power of the armed forces into play in furtherance of their own political interests and, to a large extent, those of the Communists. Purges in the Army and government administration and changes in economic policy that followed in the wake of the crisis were generally advantageous to both.

The Crisis of March 1975

The third crisis, which suddenly erupted on March 11, 1975, was in the first instance an Army affair. Spínola, who had been living since his resignation on his brother's rural estate outside Lisbon, undoubtedly attempted to mount a coup with the support of Army elements loyal to him.[26] How he was brought to the point of doing so remains an open question. COPCON leaders have hinted that they were prepared for a coup, and it appears quite possible that they not only knew of it but deliberately provoked it. The miserable failure of the coup and the particular point in time when it took place (which was extremely critical for the left-leaning officers of the MFA), in conjunction with certain details that are difficult to explain—such as the fact that the alleged conspirators were permitted to leave Portugal by helicopter without any action being taken against them—tend to lend credence to the hypothesis that the coup attempt was consciously engineered, perhaps by COPCON agents posing as Spínola supporters. This hypothesis has been repeatedly voiced in the press outside Portugal, although incontestable proof of its veracity remains lacking.[27]

In any case, the Communists were quick to go to the support of their MFA allies. The PCP had "masses of people" on the street in short order helping to convince the attacking pro-Spínola troops in front of the barracks of the 1st Light Artillery Regiment in Lisbon that they were acting against the revolution. This move enabled the party to boast in a communiqué:

[24] On Spínola's view of the MFA's connivance in the Communist move to block the demonstration, see the interview with Carvalho in Freitas, *op. cit.*, pp. 169 ff. Similar but not identical statements are made by the same officer in his *Cinco meses mudaram Portugal* (Five Months Changed Portugal), Lisbon, Portugalia Editoria, 1975; see especially pp. 13 ff and 21 ff. According to Carvalho, Spínola suspected that the barricade action by the PCP was carried out with the full knowledge and assistance of the MFA. The COPCON commander claimed, however, that he had been "surprised" by the Communist move.

[25] See Portuguese newspapers for the week following September 28.

[26] See the "Provisional Indictment" against Spínola, officially released on April 22, 1975, just three days before the elections to the Constitutional Assembly, and reprinted in most Portuguese newspapers: *e.g., Diario de Noticias* (Lisbon), April 23, 1975. Attached to the "indictment" as evidence (Annex No. 7) was the manuscript of a speech, corrected by Spínola himself, which he purportedly planned to make after seizing power. No formal court proceedings have taken place.

[27] *E.g.*, see J-F Chauvel, "The Conspiratorial Right," *Le Figaro* (Paris), March 13, 1975, and reports by Jean Ray in the same newspaper on March 16 and subsequent days; also, an article entitled "The Ambiguous Putsch," *Le Monde,* March 19, 1975. Such conjectures could of course not be published in the Portuguese press owing to the strong influence of the Communists over the printers and journalists.

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The attempted coup failed thanks to the quick and decisive action of the Armed Forces Movement and thanks also to the massive mobilization of the people, which in a few hours, from the north to the south of the country, paralyzed all fascist initiatives and offered considerable support to the Armed Forces. . . .[28]

The suppression of the coup attempt had important political consequences. Prior to March 11, the leftist forces had met with some resistance both within and outside the MFA. Inside the Movement, key figures such as Saraiva de Carvalho had recently failed to win seats on the leading bodies of COPCON in officers' elections;[29] outside it, the leftist officers had met with opposition from the non-Communist political parties to their plans to "institutionalize" the MFA so that it could continue to play a role in politics even after the Constitutional Assembly elections.

Following the victory against the alleged "reactionary" conspiracy, however, the leftist elements in the MFA were able to break down all resistance. The old General Assembly of the MFA was dissolved and replaced by a new one "elected" from lists of nominees drawn up by the leading bodies. The parties were forced to sign a "pact" with the MFA which defined the role of that organization for the next "three to five years" and assigned practically all power to it regardless of the results of the forthcoming Constitutional Assembly elections. The leading bodies of the MFA were reconstituted, and a 24-member Revolutionary Council was set up (the membership was later expanded to 28 at the insistence of Admiral Crespo). The Council, which constituted the supreme authority in the country,

General Otelo Saraivo de Carvalho, Commander of COPCON, right, pictured with a Captain Maia at an extraordinary session of the Assembly of the Armed Forces Movement held in Lisbon on May 26, 1975.

—Alain Dejean/Sygma.

immediately proceeded to nationalize the banks and insurance companies. There were arrests of both civilians and military personnel, followed by purges which further strengthened the power position of the leftist elements of the MFA. The government also underwent a reorganization, and the leading ministers from the MDP/CDE, Pereira de Moura and Mario Murteira, were charged with drawing up and putting into effect a "socialist" economic policy. This policy soon found expression in a new wave of nationalizations.

The April Elections

Even though the outcome of the March crisis spelled a further reinforcement of the power position of the MFA's left wing and, indirectly, of its Communist allies, the PCP looked forward to the April 1975 elections to the Constitutional Assembly with considerable distaste. Its leaders had long since recognized that the PCP, as a small minority party, had no hope of gaining power through free elections, and that its only chance of exercising major

[28] *11 de Março. Coordenação de textos de equipa redactorial de Decibel* (The 11th of March. A Compilation of Texts by the Editorial Staff of *Decibel*), Lisbon, Edições Lda, 1975, p. 72.

[29] The organizational structure of the MFA has undergone many changes, and there is no single law or official document that defines it completely. However, as of the time of the Constitutional Assembly elections in April 1975, the highest decision-making body was the Revolutionary Council (*Conselho de Revolução*), then consisting of 30 leading officers. Below the Council was the Assembly of the MFA, comprising 240 "representatives" of the armed forces—120 from the Army, 60 from the Navy, and 60 from the Air Force. It is not clear how these representatives were chosen, but presumably they were elected by officers' assemblies within each of the separate services. It was apparently in one of these elections that General Saraiva de Carvalho failed to be elected. On these organizational questions, see *Expresso* (Lisbon), Dec. 21, 1974; Feb. 15 and March 8, 1975. On the composition of the Revolutionary Council and the MFA Assembly, see Orlando Neves, Ed., *Textos Historicos de Revolução* (Historical Texts of the Revolution), Lisbon, Diabril Editora, 1975, pp. 297 ff and 313.

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political influence lay in close collaboration with the left-oriented elements of the ruling MFA.

For that reason, the party leadership—even while rejecting as "slander" any intimation that it opposed the holding of elections—had consistently taken the line that the people, especially in the northern, predominantly conservative sections of the country, were not ready for "democratic" elections, and that it was essential to the successful development of "democracy" in Portugal that the MFA remain in power. In a December 1974 interview, party Secretary-General Cunhal declared:

Some would like to eliminate the MFA as quickly as possible from the political life of Portugal. Because earlier attempts and projects have failed, they now want to do it by way of elections. Such intentions will go amiss. The MFA continues to be necessary for the founding and development of a new, democratic Portugal.[30]

Again, addressing a gathering of farmers in the north, Cunhal stated his belief that "our people feel that, if the MFA were to disappear this instant, they would be exposed without protection to the offensives of reaction and fascism." [31]

The PCP was not alone in its apprehensions concerning the elections. Already before the MFA leadership had extracted the pact "legitimizing" its continued exercise of power beyond the Constitutional Assembly elections, it had conducted some opinion polls to ascertain what the probable election results would be. Though the poll findings were kept secret, their main aspects became known. They revealed that not more than 15 percent of the electorate favored the PCP and its allied front, the MDP/CDE, and that the Socialist Party of Mario Soares and the Popular Democratic Party of Sa Carneiro together were favored by about 30 percent. Thereafter, all private opinion polls prior to the elections were forbidden, but it had become clear to the MFA leaders that they were in danger—as they put it—of losing at the polls what their revolution had already attained for the Portuguese people. It was to minimize this danger that they had pressured the political parties into accepting the March pact.

Even though the outcome of the elections could not really change the political situation and even though the approximate distribution of votes among the major parties was known in advance, the voting results were significant. Their main significance lay in the fact that only through the ballot box could unassailable information be obtained as to what the majority of the Portuguese people really wanted. What they wanted was something that neither the PCP nor the MFA leadership was willing to grant, but the mere fact that the elections revealed beyond question the preferences of definite proportions of the electorate carried considerable political weight.

Although the PCP, along with the other parties, put substantial effort into the pre-election campaign, its showing in the April 25 balloting was no better than had been expected. It came in third with 12.53 percent of the votes, well behind the PS with 37.87 percent and the PPD with 26.38 percent. The Communist-directed MDP/CDE obtained a mere 4.12 percent, while the Social Democratic Center (*Centro Democrático Social—CDS*) group, farthest to the right, obtained 7.65 percent. In none of the electoral districts did the Communists receive an absolute majority. In the two reputedly "red" districts of Beja and Setubel, they won three and seven Assembly seats, respectively, the same as the PS; in Evora, they won two seats, while the PS won three.[32]

A Portuguese army officer explains voting and election procedures to habitués of a local cafe in the town of Monsaras.

—Bo Bojesen/Photoreporters

[30] A. Cunhal, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 471.

[32] For the best analysis of the election results, see *Expresso*, May 3, 1975.

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No sooner were the elections over than the MFA and the Communists began publicly discounting the results. MFA spokesmen emphasized that the elections would change "nothing," and that in any case Portugal had voted for "socialism"—though it was not specified for what shading of socialism. The PCP journal *Avante* declared: "The Socialist Party commits a grave mistake if it wants to ascribe to its actual influence on the electorate the considerable number of votes which gave it 116 deputies." In reality, the paper added, the voters had voted for the Socialists because they believed that "Communists bring communism, and Socialists bring socialism"—in other words, because of "a simple matter of semantics." *Avante* went on to accuse the PS of seeking to establish a "bourgeois democracy" and reiterated that only the "people-MFA" (*i.e.,* PCP-MFA) alliance would guarantee the continuation of the Portuguese revolution.[33]

The Communist attacks on the Socialist Party led to incidents between Communists and Socialists during the May Day celebrations and also prompted a large Socialist demonstration against the PCP the next day. An attempt at a reconciliation of the two parties was subsequently undertaken at the behest of the MFA leadership, but the Socialists, emboldened by their decisive victory at the polls, made it plain that they intended to challenge the predominance of the PCP on all fronts—in the unions, in local government, and in the information media.

However, they failed. The MFA indicated that there would be no local elections for the time being, thus leaving the PCP and MDP/CDE elements in control of that level of government. As for the news media, we have already discussed what happened in the cases of *República* and Radio *Renascença.* Although a new Lisbon evening newspaper, *Jornal Novo,* did appear and managed to maintain an independent line, and although a new independent weekly, *O Tempo,* began publication after considerable struggles, the big newspapers remained in the hands of pro-Communist editorial boards and left-wing workers' committees. In the unions, the pro-Communist forces upholding the line of the Inter-union Commission experienced ups and downs in the complex struggle for dominance—which still continues at the time of writing—but they generally held their own.[34]

[33] *Avante* (Lisbon), May 1, 1975.

[34] For an account of the situation in the labor unions as of early July. See "A New Front Opens in the Union Battle," *Expresso,* July 5, 1975.

Not only did the April elections create difficulties for the Communists with respect to the democratic parties, but they also set in train developments within the MFA which confronted the PCP with a potential problem from that direction. Thus far, however, the Communists have succeeded in negotiating the hazards involved without appreciable damage to their interests.

Another Challenge

After the elections, leading officers of the Revolutionary Council began toying with the idea of "direct democracy" as a means of overcoming the power of the parties. These officers tended to blame the parties and interparty struggles for the slow progress of the revolution, which was especially conspicuous in the economic field. Indeed, they disregarded the impact on the already ailing economy of the disagreements within the MFA itself and the hasty nationalizations of heavy industry and other enterprises, banks, insurance companies, etc., by the MFA-dominated government without sufficient qualified personnel to run them, and they increasingly argued that the parties obstructed efficient government in general.

To the younger radical officers such as those who had gained seats in the MFA Assembly after the "acceleration of the revolution" following the March 1975 crisis, the notion of a "direct democracy" to be organized and led by the MFA had substantial appeal, for it would give them an opportunity to become the managers of the envisaged "direct democracy." But the PCP, in the view of the present writer, was not enthusiastic about the idea and probably did not push it. The party had consistently offered itself to the MFA as the embodiment of "the people" and hence as the ideal partner in the "people-MFA" alliance that the MFA so frequently proclaimed. Consequently, it was not in the interest of the Communists to encourage the officers to begin forming their own "people's movement." Nonetheless, the PCP, in line with its consistent policy of supporting all decisions of the MFA, did not take issue with the officers on the matter.

The commitment of the MFA to construct a system of "direct democracy" emerged over time and as the result of a complex process. Several plenary sessions of the MFA Assembly debated the subject, and the Revolutionary Council itself had an eight-day discussion about it, culminating in the

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General Saraivo de Carvalho speaks to a Portuguese paratrooper.

—AEI via Keystone.

publication of a political action program on June 21. But this program was not really adequate as a guideline since it embodied a compromise of different outlooks and proposals. Finally, on July 9, the MFA Assembly resolved this difficulty. After 18 hours of discussion, it approved a plan for "people's assemblies" at the local, provincial, and national levels which would be "animated" by the MFA and would be strictly "nonpartisan." [35] This plan had been drawn up by elements of COPCON,[36] and General Saraiva de Carvalho, commander of COPCON, had acted as its principal sponsor.

The democratic parties felt threatened by these developments, for they saw the project as an attempt to short-circuit them and to reduce their role. Since *República* resumed publishing at the same time under the editorship of a military commission instead of being returned to the control of its original editors, the Socialists chose to leave the coalition government on that issue on July 11. The Popular Democratic Party followed them on July 16 after having failed to obtain guarantees from the MFA leadership that a democratic regime would be preserved. Independent ministers also withdrew, and the government collapsed.

For its part, the PCP continued to publicly endorse everything that the MFA did and planned to do.[37] During the crisis, it became clear that what concerned the Communists most was the apparent weakening of the political position of Prime Minister Gonçalves, whom they were anxious to see remain as head of the government.[38] This reaction confirmed the feeling of many observers that Gonçalves was *the* member—or at least *one of the* members—of the MFA leadership that the PCP preferred as a partner. It should be noted here that General Saraiva de Carvalho, the real force behind the decision to experiment with "direct democracy," is known to be rather sympathetic to leftist groups more extreme than the PCP.*

The Current Outlook

What, then, can be said at this juncture about the prospects for the Communists? It is true that from the beginning of the revolution there has been a steady movement to the left, with the PCP's cooperation with the MFA probably the decisive factor in producing this trend—especially in the cases of the three major shifts that took place in July and September 1974 and in March 1975. But to date, the MFA, not the PCP, has exercised power, and the influence of the PCP on the officers varies from individual to individual. Vasco Gonçalves is usually counted as the Communists' closest ally. Saraiva de Carvalho is a radical who attempts to use the PCP when he deems it convenient to do so. Admiral Rosa Coutinho and the officers associated with him are leftist but not Communists. While they will

[35] This plan was approved by a secret session of the MFA Assembly. For a report and commentary on what took place, see *ibid.*, July 12, 1975, p. 3.

[36] On the substance of the plans initiated by COPCON, see *ibid.*, June 28, 1975, pp. 1-6 and 15-19.

[37] The Communist-controlled Interunion Commission organized a demonstration in support of the MFA in Lisbon on July 10, 1975.

[38] On July 7, 1975, the Political Commission of the PCP Central Committee issued a statement warning against "dangerous ruptures affecting the revolutionary process" and asserting that "the intensification of attacks against the Prime Minister" was threatening to "create a tense and grave situation for the progressive forces." See all Portuguese newspapers for July 7, 1975, and *Le Monde*, July 9, 1975.

* Editors' Note—Just before this article went to press, the MFA Assembly voted to vest supreme authority in a triumvirate composed of General Costa Gomes, General Gonçalves, and General Saraiva de Carvalho. The Revolutionary Council is henceforth to function as an advisory body.

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collaborate with the PCP for tactical reasons, they are suspicious of it—as they are of all parties. Their aim appears to be the abolition of the parties and the establishment of left-wing military rule. The so-called moderates in the Revolutionary Council (Major Melo Antunes, Major Vitor Alves, Admiral Crespo, and President Costa Gomes) favor a gradual transition to socialism, without total destruction of the previous economic system and with maintenance of good relations with the West European nations and the United States.

Moreover, the shift toward the left in June-July 1975, as already indicated, probably was not of the PCP's doing. In all likelihood, it resulted from the influx of army radicals and left-wingers into the Assembly of the MFA in the wake of the attempted coup of March 11. The radicalization of the Assembly gave the radicals in the Revolutionary Council a sufficient base to override the "moderates" and the elements closely allied with the PCP, and to push through the scheme for "direct democracy."

The future role of the Communists, thus, will depend to a large degree on what happens to and within the MFA. That, in turn, will be heavily affected by economic developments. The country today is quite close to economic breakdown and keeps afloat by spending the reserves accumulated under Salazar. Productivity has decreased because of the disruption of economic activity caused by the nationalization measures and by widespread agitation in factories and offices and on the large country estates of the South. There is high unemployment (250,000-300,000 out of a working force of 3 million); inflation, while slowing down, is still running about 20 percent a year; and the balance of payments is highly adverse owing to increased imports, reduced exports, vanishing tourist trade, and reduced remittances from workers abroad (one million Portuguese work in France). The probable influx of Portuguese citizens from Angola and Mozambique in the aftermath of independence for these colonies only promises to exacerbate the economic stresses.

This bleak economic picture could get even bleaker in the months ahead. It seems highly likely that the MFA's experiment with "direct democracy" will at least at the outset add to the economic disarray as well as to the political confusion. The PCP and the ultraleft groups will undoubtedly compete in trying to penetrate the planned "people's committees" and "assemblies." At the same time, the Socialists and the Popular Democrats display strong determination to challenge the MFA and its Communist allies in regard to "direct democracy." If the MFA does not back down, increasing chaos would appear to be the most likely outcome.

Under conditions of economic, administrative, and political turmoil, strong-man rule often results. So far, the MFA does not have a single head capable of dominating the picture. Rather, it has remained fragmented into many tendencies. But if conditions worsen significantly, a political strong man could emerge from the leftist military circles or as the result of a right-wing coup in reaction against them.

Everyone in Portugal is aware of the dangers of a Chilean-style development, but nobody seems to be able to do much to prevent its occurrence. To be sure, if the MFA proves unable to rule the country, the possibility that the democratic parties might get a second chance still exists. Indeed, there is ample evidence that the Portuguese people would prefer such a solution. But bringing about an equilibrium somewhere between the extremes of left and right always poses many more difficulties than sliding into one of the two extremes.

If a military dictatorship does eventuate, the Communists could well find that their policy has backfired on them. Although the MFA's decision to experiment with "direct democracy" may have gone against the desires of the PCP, there can be no question that the actions of the Communists during the first year of the revolution helped decisively to create the preconditions that led to the ever-growing radicalization of the MFA. That this Communist course was deliberate and calculated Cunhal recently made quite clear in a remarkably frank interview with Oriana Fallaci which shocked the Portuguese when they read parts of it. He declared that in Portugal "there is no possibility of a democracy like the one you have in West Europe," and he added: "Portugal will not be a country with democratic freedoms and monopolies, it will not allow it." At the same time, he acknowledged that "perhaps we will again have a fascist Portugal," but he maintained that "that is a risk which we must run. . . ." [39] There is a distinct possibility that the risk may turn out to be much greater than he would wish.

[39] The Fallaci interview with Cunhal first appeared in *L'Europeo* (Milan) and was reprinted in *Paris-Match (Paris)* for the week of June 22, 1975. In Lisbon, brief extracts from the interview, as reported from Paris by José Alves, appeared in *Expresso*, June 28, 1975, p. 12. The statements quoted here are taken from Stephen Rosenfeld, "Portugal's Communist Future," *The Washington Post* (Washington DC), June 27, 1975.

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The Interparty Drama

By Kevin Devlin

For around two years, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist parties loyal to it have been trying to promote two related projects, both intended to produce (to the extent possible) a rallying of the ranks within the international Communist movement. These are (1) the organization of a pan-European Communist conference, now in a prolonged and far from smooth process of preparation; and (2) the convening of a new "world" Communist conference, a proposal that has been slow to get off the ground at all.

There are precedents for both projects: the pan-European Communist conference held in Karlovy Vary, Czechoslovakia, in April 1967, and the Moscow international conferences of 1960 and 1969. But they are precedents only in a limited sense. Even if we knew all that went on behind closed doors at Karlovy Vary, it would be of little help in sketching a probable scenario for the new pan-European meeting, to be held in East Berlin: and the next world conference—if and when it comes—may differ from the 1969 meeting in Moscow as radically as the latter did from the 81-party gathering of 1960. To compare is to contrast, and an examination of these earlier essays at "conciliar communism" not only may cast useful light on the problems and prospects of the two current projects; it may also help us to discern wider patterns of change in the Communist world.

The past decade and a half has constituted a period of far-reaching evolution in the international Communist movement—a period during which, on the international level, the economic, military, and political power of the USSR has increased greatly, while at the same time the authority and influence of the CPSU over other Communist parties and regimes has been widely challenged, weakened, and in some instances flatly rejected.

Undoubtedly, the most important single factor in this complex pattern of change has been the Sino-Soviet conflict. The disagreements between the two Communist powers burst upon the consciousness of the minor parties with traumatic suddenness at the Romanian CP Congress in June 1960 and then dominated the 81-party Moscow conference the subsequent November—when Enver Hoxha of Albania joined, and in fact outdid, China's Teng Hsiao-p'ing in violently denouncing Soviet misdeeds and errors.[1] By the summer of 1963, the rift thus revealed had become an enduring interstate and interparty conflict. Within a few years, the polarizing impact of this struggle had made factionalism and splinter parties worldwide phenomena.

But the polarizing effect of the Sino-Soviet conflict was not universal. Indeed, one of its important consequences was that it offered certain regimes and parties the option of neutralism: it gave them increased freedom in the area of interparty action, through which they could strengthen their claim to autonomy (already conceded in theory).

This applied particularly to the Communist regimes, since their state power added another,

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[1] Nearly ten years later, in the summer of 1970, the Albanians issued the full text of Hoxha's speech at the 81-party conference in the third volume of a series of party documents. An English version was published as a booklet. This historic document shows that Hoxha rejected Soviet authority in extremely offensive terms—with strong personal attacks on Nikita Khrushchev—and that, while supporting Chinese positions, he played down the new Peking-Tirana alliance, arguing his "principled" case largely in Albanian terms. See Kevlin Devlin and Iz (Louis Zanga), "New Light on the 1960 Conference: Albanians Break 'Secrecy Pact,'" Radio Free Europe (hereafter RFE) *Research* (Munich), CAA Report No. 0698, Aug. 13, 1970.

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international dimension to the neutralist option. In Europe, Yugoslavia—an *ex-officio* neutralist-independent regime, so to speak—was joined by Romania, as party leader Nicolae Ceausescu widened and institutionalized his predecessor Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's initial challenge to Soviet authority.[2] Across the Atlantic, Fidel Castro's Cuba, a self-proclaimed member of the now-divided family (accepted into the "fold" only belatedly by Moscow and Peking) not only became ultra-independent but presented itself as a separate center of regional revolutionary activity, thus challenging the Soviets, the Chinese, and the Latin American Communist leaderships alike. In Asia, the Koreans veered back in the middle of the decade from a pro-Chinese posture, through a warily limited rapprochement with Moscow, to a vociferously anti-imperialist independence that made them the natural allies of the Cubans. As for the Vietnamese, their stepped-up war of "national liberation" in the face of massive US intervention put them in a special position, in a sense above the Sino-Soviet conflict; they stayed there through adroit interparty maneuvering and a singleminded maintenance of priorities.

It was a remarkable transformation. At the beginning of 1960, the Communist camp (except, of course, for the nonaligned Yugoslavs) had to outward appearances been united under Soviet leadership. Five years later, only half of the 14 ruling regimes remained fully loyal: the other seven were either directly anti-Soviet (China and Albania) or neutralist-independent.

Among the nonruling parties, changes in interparty relations were most marked in Western Europe and in Asia. In the Asian parties, such shifts were largely a result of reaction to the Sino-Soviet conflict (although in Japan, Indonesia, and India, important domestic factors were also involved). In Western Europe, on the other hand, the ferment of change which began to affect an increasing number of CP's in the early 1960's was a matter of adaptation to environmental realities, although the process was uneven in different parties. With the Italian CP (PCI) in the vanguard, these parties became more aware of their own political interests and opportunities in economically-advanced societies of pluralistic, constitutional democracy. They also became more conscious of the need to seek political allies and to extend their electoral base by presenting a more acceptable public image. Both considerations led them to stress that their ultimate goal was a *national* road to socialism, not a "people's democracy" of the East European type; and this in turn led them, on occasion, to dissociate themselves from unpopular developments in Eastern Europe—as, for example, when they joined in the chorus of criticism provoked by the Siniavsky-Daniel trial in early 1966.

One should perhaps note that this trend toward greater independence was not merely a matter of political opportunism: there was also, to varying degrees, an element of genuine rethinking, of conscious destalinization, going on in Communist ranks. In many West European parties, this found expression in an unprecendented freedom of internal debate, which in some cases (notably in Sweden and Finland) led to further, controversial changes in the leadership's position on various issues (including relations with the CPSU).

The Long Road to the 1969 Conference

The limitations which such changes in attitude, at least on the part of certain "pivotal" parties, placed on the CPSU's own freedom of interparty maneuver was demonstrated by the difficulties which the new Soviet leaders encountered in their efforts to revive Nikita Khrushchev's plan for a new world Communist conference,[3] which—it was hoped—would produce, if not a collective denunciation of the Chinese, at least a collective affirmation of positions and principles that the Maoists could be shown to have abandoned or opposed. By the fall of 1966, the eruption of the Cultural Revolution in China and the Maoist refusal to accept "unity of action" on Vietnam had created an eminently favorable climate for such an initiative. The calls for a new conference, made at that time by East European

[2] Gheorghiu-Dej's initial challenge to the Soviets was formulated in April 1964, in a declaration of the RCP Central Committee which rejected the notion of a single directing center for the world Communist movement. *Scinteia* (Bucharest), April 26, 1964.

[3] The new Soviet leaders were stuck with Khrushchev's commitment to hold a preparatory meeting of the "editorial commission" for an international conference in mid-December 1964; they first postponed it to March 1965 and then accepted the Italian CP's demand that it be purely consultative. Even so, the Romanians joined the pro-Chinese and neutralist parties (of the 26 invited) in boycotting the meeting. To save face, the communiqué still put forward a conference as an eventual goal but stated that consultations would now be necessary "to solve the question of calling . . . a preliminary [81-party] meeting," which in turn might (or might not) convene a conference of "all the fraternal parties." (See Pravda [Moscow], March 10, 1965.) In fact, the project was shelved—until developments a year and a half later encouraged the CPSU to take it up again.

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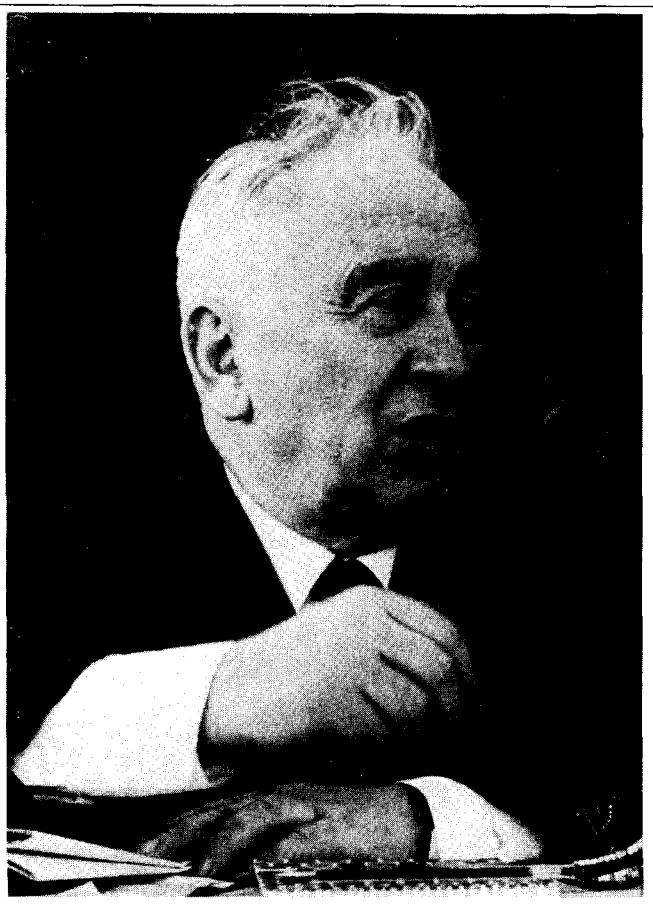

Luigi Longo, Secretary-General of the Italian Communist Party from 1965 to 1972, a consistent advocate of the PCI's independent line vis-à-vis Moscow initiated by his predecessor, Palmiro Togliatti.

—Photoreporters.

leaders, soon swelled into a pro-Soviet chorus that included the overwhelming majority of the world's Communist parties.

But the "silent minority"—or at least certain key parties—had taken on a new importance. A full year passed until, in October-November 1967, the Italian party gave the "green light" for the conference project through a series of articles by Secretary-General Luigi Longo, published in the Communist weekly journal *Rinascita* (Rome), which in effect laid down the PCI's conditions for participation in the conference.[4] Significantly, the announcement that the first preparatory meeting for the international conference would be held in Budapest in February 1968 was made simultaneously in Moscow and Rome, by the CPSU and the PCI.[5] Later, the Romanians in turn made known the conditions on which they would attend the Budapest meeting.[6]

Whether or not the Italians and Romanians could make these conditions "stick" was, of course, another matter; indeed, it was obvious from the start that some of the demands were maximum bargaining positions rather than real conditions. But what was important was that the bargaining was going on, that these independent parties were able to pose minimum conditions for their participation in the conference project. In any case, as it turned out, many of the more important conditions laid down by the PCI were in fact observed in practice, with the result that the international movement—or, rather, the greater part of it—moved into a new era of "conciliar communism" radically different from the precedents set by the 1960 conference (or, for that matter, by an earlier conference of 1957 in Moscow attended by ruling parties only).

Some of the changes were already evident at the Budapest meeting, at which 67 parties out of more than 80 turned up. For one thing, the previous conventions of unanimity and secrecy were abandoned. Individual parties publicized their views at press conferences and in their own press organs, revealing a wide range of disagreements on many subjects—the Sino-Soviet conflict, interparty relations, the timing and agenda of the conference, etc. The Romanians were boldest in exploiting these new conditions: having challenged Soviet positions on a number of basic issues, they scored a further point by seizing upon a pretext to stage a dramatic walkout.[7]

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[4] The PCI's main conditions, set forth in Longo's last article (*Rinascita*, Nov. 10, 1967) were that the conference must be consultative, with no binding programmatic content; the principle of the autonomy of each party must be strictly respected; nonattendance must not affect a party's status as part of the world movement; any party must have the right "not to accept, or to accept only partially or with reservations any eventual [collective] decision"; and a basic purpose of the meeting should be to establish "new forms of unity and collaboration," which should extend to non-Communist forces.

[5] This announcement stated that 18 of the 19 parties which had attended the March 1965 consultative meeting in Moscow had decided to convene another consultative meeting, with the aim of ultimately arranging a new international conference. The missing party was Cuba's (this period marked the flood tide of Castroite independence).

[6] The Romanian Communists decided to attend the preparatory meeting only after talks in December 1967 between Paul Niculescu-Mizil and Zoltan Komocsin (of Hungary's host party), when the Romanians were assured that only agenda items accepted by all in advance would be discussed in Budapest and that there would be no moves to "excommunicate" any party. The Romanians specified that "the Chinese Communist Party's internal situation cannot be the theme of either the Budapest consultative meeting or the international conference." *Partelet* (Bucharest), December 1967.

[7] This opportunity arose when the Syrian delegate made a critical reference to Romania's stand on the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Romanians demanded that Khaled Bagdash withdraw his remarks. He finally did—whereupon the Romanians walked out anyhow.

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In their absence, it was decided that a preparatory commission of all parties which wished to participate —another significant innovation—would draw up draft documents for the final conference, to be held in Moscow in November-December 1968.

But by the time that this editorial commission met for its second session in June, its work was overshadowed by a new interparty crisis—shortly to erupt with dire impact on the entire Communist movement. The efflorescence of "socialist democratization" in Czechoslovakia in April-August 1968, and the coercive reaction of the USSR and its allies to this infectious example, transformed the international Communist scene. The nonruling parties of Western Europe, in particular, had perceived their political stake in the cause of Alexander Dubcek's reform program and, with few exceptions, reacted to the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in August with a chorus of criticism and condemnation. The Italian, French, and Spanish parties in fact warned the Soviets in advance that they would react in this manner. Following the PCI's lead, a dozen Western CP's called for the postponement of the international conference because of the Czechoslovak situation.

They had their way. In November, one week before the conference was due to start, an announcement was issued that it had been put off until May 1969 (later changed to June). But more than that had been changed: on the insistence of the dissident parties, it was decided that the draft document which had been prepared in June 1968 would be scrapped and replaced by a new one to be drawn up by a working group representing eight "balanced" parties.[8]

How and where these parties went about preparing a revised draft is not known. But when the full preparatory commission met again in March 1969, "leaks" and individual statements revealed that the 66 delegations present were engaged in heated debate over the new draft and its four sections. A flood of amendments came from the Italians, Romanians, British, Swiss, and others. It was decided that, pending a final session of the commission, the draft, with amendments and minority viewpoints, would be referred to the central committees of all Communist parties, including those which had not participated in the preparatory meetings. This was a major concession wrung from the conservatives since, in advance of the conference, it acknowledged the autonomy of all parties and the fact that they were not necessarily bound by commitments made by their delegates in Moscow.

The last round of this complex preconference confrontation of attitudes and ideas—conducted over terrain now transformed in great measure by the Soviet regime's action vis-à-vis Czechoslovakia —took place at a final session of the commission in late May and the first few days of June, with 70 delegations present. French and Swiss party spokesmen revealed that 450 new amendments to the draft document had been submitted (*i.e.*, in addition to those presented at the March session) and that, of these, about 100 had been accepted.[9] Other sources indicated that the Romanians had put forward about 100 of the 450. Yet it was also reported that no basic change had been made in the draft.[10]

This last fact pointed to a major Soviet strength: the CPSU could always count on the disciplined support of a comfortable majority of the world's Communist parties and could exploit that fact at conferences—as long as the procedural rule of consensus was not adopted. But the concessions that the CPSU had had to make to extend conference participation beyond this loyalist following had already substantially diminished the significance of the ready-made majority. For example, the *suivistes* were ready to join the CPSU in condemning Maoism at the drop of a slogan; but at the Budapest consultative meeting they had had to agree that no party, absent or present, would be condemned in the conference documents.

The Dénouement

When the conference itself finally convened June 5-17, 1969, there were 75 delegations in attendance out of 88 invited,[11] with the Cubans and

[8] Specifically, the CPSU and the parties of Hungary, Italy, France, Belgium, India, the Sudan, and Uruguay.

[9] Georges Marchais in *l'Humanité* (Paris), May 31, and Swiss CP Politburo resolution, *Voix Ouvrière* (Geneva), June 3, 1969.

[10] According to the Swiss CP resolution of June 1 (*ibid.*), "A dozen other parties [in addition to the PCI]—including our own—presented amendments of principle to this document, to make it acceptable to all parties. These amendments were rejected." It was, incidentally, typical of the changed times that the draft document (without minor, last-minute changes) was "leaked" several weeks before the conference; the present writer had the German text by late May. It was therefore possible to identify last-minute changes—mostly representing loyalist concessions.

[11] These were the 81 parties of 1960, plus the Yugoslavs and six new parties. No notice was taken of successionist parties, although at the Budapest meeting in February 1968 the Romanians had vainly urged that both rival parties in some countries (specifically, India and Israel) should be invited.

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Swedes present only as "observers" (a status that did not prevent them from making challenging contributions). Unprecedented publicity enabled observers to follow the nearest thing to a free, general debate on the principles and practices of communism that the international movement had known since the October Revolution. Hundreds of accredited journalists covered the conference; delegations could publish their own contributions immediately, as well as hold press conferences and "leak" news and views to correspondents. Moreover, a promise had evidently been extracted from the Soviet hosts to publish agreed summaries of each speech, so that *Pravda* readers had rare access to some radical criticism of their own regime.[12]

The complex pattern of divergence thus revealed covered a wide range of subjects—including, in the first rank, views on Maoism, Czechoslovakia, and the main conference document, but also such issues as interparty relations, socialist democracy, the meaning of revolution in various local or regional situations, relations with non-Communist forces, etc.

The Soviet strategy clearly was to obtain as wide a consensus as possible in support of the CPSU's positions, with particular reference to the conflict with the Chinese. The commitment made in Budapest probably ruled out any move to have any formal criticism of Maoism incorporated into the main document (although several minor pro-Soviet delegations urged just that). The alternative was to have the Chinese criticized as vigorously as possible by the maximum number of delegations, so that the conference could be presented as a sort of majority consensus of the world movement, from which the "Maoist group" had excluded itself by its errors and splitting activities. As it turned out, it was not a very impressive consensus. Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev's massive attack on the Chinese on the second day of the conference [13] was duly followed by similar polemics from the East European regimes (except Romania), from a few conservative or client West European parties, and from a parade of Latin American and Middle Eastern CP's which made up the numerical majority of the loyalist contingent. But the "independent-neutralists" refused to join in; another group criticized Maoism in terms so mild that they could be regarded as having failed to respond to the Soviet lead; and several other delegations issued such criticism in terms that could be read as an implicit reproach to the Russians.

As Laurie Aarons, head of the Australian CP, remarked, if some party delegations could attack the Chinese, others could discuss Czechoslovakia[14]; and (despite the efforts of Czechoslovak party chief Gustáv Husák to head them off) they duly did—nearly a dozen of them, sometimes in very forceful terms. Other groups which did not mention Czechoslovakia (*e.g.,* the French) made it clear that they had not changed their position on the subject.

In the end, 14 parties out of 75 expressed opposition to, or reservations about, a document that already contained important Soviet concessions—notably the failure to assign any special status to the CPSU, the new interparty principle of "noninterference" in the affairs of others, and the statement (a last-minute amendment) that "there is no leading center of the international Communist movement." Five did not sign the final conference document at all; four signed only the section on anti-imperialist unity; and five signed only after having expressed reservations of various kinds.[15]

What really mattered, however, was not the number of delegations that criticized or rejected a document largely marked by triumphalist jargon and inadequate analysis, but the fact that they were able to do so and then free to publicize their disagreement. The 1969 conference, and the precedents it established, marked the institutionalization of diversity and dissent in the world Communist movement. This was emphasized by the most striking difference between the 1960 and 1969 conference documents. Whereas the former, adopted (apparently) with monolithic unanimity, announced itself as binding on all CP's, the latter was not binding on anyone—at best, it offered vague guidelines and useful citations for conservative loyalists. To borrow a metaphor from church history: Nikita Khrushchev set out to convene the Council of Trent; and Leonid Brezhnev ended up with Vatican II.

[12] The wide press coverage of the conference need not—indeed, could not—be cited here. For an English-language record of the proceedings and speeches at the conference, see *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties*, Prague, Peace and Socialism Publishers, 1969.

[13] *Ibid.* Significantly, Brezhnev felt constrained to claim that "until a short time ago we did not have the intention of raising this question at the conference," but that "recent events . . . oblige us to dwell on it."

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] *Ibid.* The five which did not sign were the Cuban and Swedish observers and the British, Norwegian, and Dominican CP's; the four which signed only the anti-imperialist section were the CP's of Italy, Australia, San Marino, and Réunion; the five which signed after expressing reservations were those of Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Morocco, and the Sudan.

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During the years following the 1969 conference the tempo of interparty change generally slowed, but some significant trends and events may be briefly noted before we move on to the more recent past, when the Soviets took to the conference trail again.

Intermezzo

In a sense, the most important development was a nondevelopment—that is, the failure of the two major Communist powers to move seriously toward a settlement of their differences. Instead, the Sino-Soviet conflict became more of an habitual interstate antagonism as its ideological dimensions faded, a tendency strengthened by China's much greater involvement in international affairs and by the US policy of détente with both regimes. At the same time, Peking's declining interest in the "Marxist-Leninist" splinter parties it had formerly promoted (a role partly taken over by Tirana) encouraged more CP's to adopt a neutralist attitude toward the Sino-Soviet conflict—as demonstrated by the move of the independent Spanish Communist Party to normalize relations with the Chinese in late 1971.

A significant change was Cuba's normalization of relations with Moscow (and the Latin American CP's) around 1970, as Castro tacitly abandoned *guevarismo* and concentrated on building his own brand of socialism (here normalization did not, of course, mean sovietization).

In this period, Communist attention was often focused on far-flung areas and events—the reduction of the direct military role of the US in South Vietnam, the fortunes of *Unidad Popular* (Popular Unity) in Chile, the fate of the Sudanese CP, etc. At the same time, these were years of a steady increase in the USSR's strategic and political weight in world affairs, as Moscow pursued a more active foreign policy on several fronts, while still emphasizing East-West détente. Gradually, the traumatic memory of August 1968 faded, and many Western parties (not all) tacitly accepted "normalization" in Czechoslovakia as a fact of life to be adjusted to in interparty relations—although only the Austrian CP openly reversed its judgment on the invasion, and that after a purge of its best and brightest.

At the same time, there were also new patterns of disunity, within parties as well as between parties. Finland offers an instructive example. After years of dissension between progressive and conservative factions, the invasion of Czechoslovakia envenomed disunity to the point where, by 1970, there were in effect two "parallel" Communist organizations, only formally united in a single party (the SKP). What is significant is the role that the CPSU played, or failed to play, in this situation. By repeated interventions, the Soviets succeeded in averting a formal split in the SKP, and they had enough influence to obtain a disproportionate share of seats for the conservative faction in the leadership; but they found no way to restore unity to a divided party that had so long deferred to their hegemonic geopolitical influence.

Back on the Conference Trail

It was in 1973 that things really got moving again. Early in that year (it was later learned [16]), a PCI delegation discussed with the CPSU the possibility of, and conditions for, a pan-European conference. In July, at the third annual summit meeting of eight ruling parties (the Warsaw Pact countries plus Mongolia) in the Crimea, a proposal for a new world conference was reportedly discussed. In September, Communists found a new source of often esoteric controversy in their analyses of the lessons to be drawn from the fall of Salvador Allende's regime in Chile. In October came the Middle East war, the consequences of which propelled the Western world (if not the world *tout court*) into a new, crisis-shadowed era. In November, the first public calls were sounded by pro-Soviet party leaders for a European conference to be followed by a world meeting—this within the context of attacks on the Chinese. Let us examine some of these developments in more detail, concentrating first on the feelers for, and resistance to, a "global" gathering of Communists.

One is struck, to begin with, by the caution with which the Soviet leadership approached the task of drumming up support for a new world conference. Significantly, it was Yugoslav sources that first reported, just after the Crimea meeting, Soviet-East European plans to organize such a gathering—

[16] See Gian Carlo Pajetta, "Common Action of the European CP's," *Rinascita*, Oct. 25, 1974. Pajetta said that in the course of a PCI delegation meeting with Brezhnev in Moscow at the beginning of 1973, "it was agreed, on our proposal, that it would be opportune" to consider calling a pan-European conference when the other parties concerned showed "similar interest."

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as if sounding the tocsin, one might think. But the first public word came only three months later, from the leader of the West German Communist party (DKP), Herbert Mies. Speaking at a DKP congress in November, he said that the years since 1969 had "given rise to new questions, new developments which require conclusions [to be drawn]." The party therefore believed that "the time is maturing for a new world conference," and further thought that the holding of a pan-European conference "could also serve to prepare a world meeting." [17]

Mies's phraseology recalled the initial stages of the previous Soviet campaign for a world conference, in late 1966, when a chorus of loyalist voices—two-thirds of the Communist parties—declared on cue that conditions for another conference were becoming "increasingly ripe." The comparison, however, underscores the contrast: this time there was no chorus—indeed, for a full month there was no official echo whatever to Mies's undoubtedly "inspired" call.[18] Then, on December 7, his call for a world conference was repeated by two East European leaders, Janos Kádár of Hungary and Todor Zhivkov of Bulgaria, both speaking at a Budapest rally—and both linking their appeals for a gathering of Communists with sharp attacks on the Chinese.

There was now no doubt that the Soviet leadership, still remaining discreetly in the background, was striving to organize another international conference. Among its several motives, it probably hoped that such a gathering would afford a show of support in the face of intensified Sino-Soviet polemics; would strengthen Moscow's hand in effecting disciplined coordination within the East European bloc, on ideological as well as economic and foreign-policy levels; and would provide a forum for justifying (and exploiting) the combined Soviet strategies of détente and selective penetration abroad, "economism" and the repression of dissension at home, and resistance in general to the danger of "ideological subversion." [19]

The Kremlin's increasing pressure for a closing of the ranks, within the bloc and within the movement, was manifested by a series of multilateral meetings on various themes held in late 1973 and early 1974. The most significant of these was an unprecedented "ideological conference" held in Moscow in mid-December and attended by the Central Committee secretaries of the ruling parties which had met in Crimea in July, plus a representative of the Cuban CP. The communiqué was unrevealing, but Vasil Bilak of Czechoslovakia later said that the meeting had agreed on the need for "coordination of the ideological work of the fraternal parties of the socialist countries . . . and of the ideological struggle of the entire international Communist movement." [20]

Vasil Bilak, member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, a frequent spokesman of the CPCS in interparty gatherings.

—Pictorial Parade.

[17] *Neues Deutschland* (East Berlin), Nov. 3, 1973.

[18] That Mies was not merely speaking for the DKP was demonstrated by the fact that the Soviet and East German party press promptly published his statement.

[19] The value which the CPSU attaches to endorsement of its foreign policies (and hence of its combined roles as champion of peace and patron of revolutionary liberation) by Third World and Western CP's was demonstrated by an episode in the fall of 1973. In late October the independent Australian CP announced, after talks in Moscow, that the conditions posed by the Soviets for a normalization of relations included the demand that the CPA "endorse and fully support Soviet foreign policy" and that it refrain from "anti-Soviet" criticism." The Australian delegates rejected these and other conditions as "unacceptable." *Tribune* (Sydney), Nov. 6-12, 1973.

[20] *Rude Pravo* (Prague), Jan. 9, 1974.

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It would have been surprising if the Romanians had agreed to such a formulation. Nor did they, it seems: the Moscow correspondent of Tanjug (the Yugoslav press agency) on December 23 quoted informed sources as saying that the Romanian delegates—one of whom went on to Tokyo for talks with the independent-neutralist Japanese CP—had taken part only in the "exchange of views on action against bourgeois and imperialist propaganda." [21]

The same Tanjug correspondent himself had no doubt about what was afoot. "It is assumed that the present consultation is in fact [a prelude to] broader preparations for a new world conference," he reported on December 18. The Soviet leadership, he went on, supported this plan, "which, it is gathered, was discussed at the Crimea meeting . . . as well as during bilateral meetings held of late between Soviet leaders and representatives of the French, Italian, and some other Communist parties."

In general, resistance to the new conference project was expressed through a lack of response. But, even in the initial stage, there was also open opposition. One early and clear rejection of the project was offered by the independent Spanish party (PCE), in a report delivered at a Central Committee plenum in September 1973 by Manuel Azcárate.[22] Referring to articles by the Bulgarian ideologist Konstantin Tellalov and a more obscure Soviet writer named Kotlov, Azcárate said that "there exists a project for the convening of an international conference." The PCE, he announced more than a month before Mies's first public call to arms, would refuse to participate in such a conference if, as it seemed, the purpose was to "rally a series of parties around the CPSU and to condemn the Chinese CP," in the process returning to "the practice of unconditional solidarity with the CPSU." In February 1974, the Soviets replied with a harsh attack on Azcárate in the CPSU bimonthly journal *Partiinaia zhizn* (Party Life), accusing him—unfairly, since he had criticized both the Russians and the Chinese—of "purely and simply lying and doing a favor to the anti-Leninist and anti-Soviet position of the Chinese leadership." (Rather obviously on the defensive, the article implied that one of Azcárate's "lies" was "the allegation that [a new conference] might lead to a return to the practice of unconditional acceptance of the CPSU line and to the formation of a single organizational center for the Communist movement.") The PCE reacted to the Soviet attack by issuing to its militants at home and in exile a brochure containing the full texts of both the *Partiinaia zhizn* article and Azcárate's report, together with an 18-point refutation of the Soviet argument.[23] This put the two parties eyeball to eyeball—and, as we shall see, eventually the Soviets blinked.

Another party which took an early stand against a conference was the Japanese CP. In his New Year's message for 1974, published in *Akahata* (Tokyo) January 1, Chairman Kenji Miyamoto spoke of moves for a new world conference and claimed that some proponents of the gathering entertained evident "intentions to promote 'ideological unification' and 'purification' by attacking not only the Chinese CP but also the parties in various capitalist countries which do not show 'loyalty' to the CPSU." In effect, he went on, this "cannot but become an attempt to establish not only a center but also a court of judgment in the international Communist movement." Some months later, there followed a polemical exchange between the CPSU and the JCP (significantly indirect on the Soviet side [24]) that reflected a further strengthening of the JCP's independent-neutralist stand—which, unlike that of the Romanians, was based on a critical attitude toward both major regimes.

[21] On Dec. 27, 1973, the Romanian CP's Executive Committee, after hearing a report on this Moscow meeting, issued a statement saying that "the mandate and guidelines established for the Romanian delegation" fully corresponded with established policy and indicated that "in future, too, [the party] should proceed in the same way."

[22] "On the International Policy of the Party: A Report by M. Azcárate before the Central Comittee," *Nuestra Bandera* (a clandestine publication of the Spanish CP), No. 72, 1973, pp. 15-29. Of the report's four sections, the second, dealing with "the activities and operations carried out by the PCE in order to counter the tendency of some socialist countries to establish diplomatic relations with the Francoist government," was not published—an editorial note explained—since "the party's political position with regard to this problem is already well known." The PCE has, indeed, consistently criticized any dealings with Madrid by Communist regimes—whether the USSR, Poland, East Germany, or China.

[23] See Kevin Devlin, "Spanish CP Stands Firm Against Soviet Attack," RFE *Research*, CAA Report No. 2046, April 11, 1974.

[24] The Soviet counterattack took the form of the abridged reprinting in *Partiinaia zhizn* (No. 10, May 1974) of an article by the Argentinian CP leader Athos Fava, from the February 1974 issue of the latter party's organ, *La Nueva Era* (Tandil). Fava attacked the JCP in particular for its "unprecedented" demand for the return of the Kuriles from the USSR and its attempt to "draw a parallel between the CPSU and the Chinese leadership" (see an English version in the US Communist Party organ *Political Affairs*, [New York], November 1974). The JCP replied with a long, polemical "rebuttal" in *Akahata*, Sept. 15, 1974, harshly criticizing Soviet (and Chinese) interparty policies and concluding scornfully that Fava's "treatise" was one of "complete subservience to the CPSU leadership and the imposition of this [view] on others." The Soviets do not seem to have reacted to the latter salvo.

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The Italian CP, on the other hand, adopted an indirect approach toward the conference project. Officially, the Italians simply ignored it—except in a little-noticed interview which Sergio Segre gave to a non-Communist magazine in February 1974. Asked about the possibility of a new world Communist gathering, he replied: "It is much discussed, but we consider it unlikely, at least in the near future, and in any event we reaffirm our resolute opposition to any Communist conference which has as its main aim the condemnation of the Chinese comrades and the creation of a new Comintern." [25]

The Romanians, while aiso avoiding a provocative challenge to the CPSU, took a somewhat different approach. Their tactic—reflected in interviews granted by Ceausescu to *Die Presse* (Vienna) of March 23 and *The Guardian* (Manchester) of April 9, 1974—was to accept the idea of a conference in principle but to demand that certain limiting conditions be observed. In the *Presse* interview, Ceausescu insisted that a world conference should "not in any way affect the autonomy and independence of Communist parties" and should also "in no way lead to the policy of another party being put up for debate." Two further conditions concerned the adoption of any common "manifesto": first, such a document must be prepared with the agreement of all, and secondly, it must not be binding upon anyone.[26] In the *Guardian* interview, the Romanian chief added the further condition—as a maximalist goal which obviously could not be achieved—that the conference should be organized "with the participation of all parties." Summing up the RCP's stance, he said that "there is no question of organizing such a meeting in the immediate future."

Of particular interest, though more difficult to assess, were the positions of two important parties: the Cuban and the French. When Raul Castro visited Bulgaria in March 1974, Radio Sofia reported (on March 14) that he and Todor Zhivkov agreed on "the necessity of starting preparations for the convocation of a new meeting." But the official Cuban version—published in *Granma* (Havana), March 13—was significantly different and noncommittal: "Opinions were exchanged on the need to study the possibilities for the preparation of a new meeting." For many months thereafter, no Cuban spokesmen made any reference to the conference project—nor did the Cubans join in anti-Maoist polemics (though, as we shall see, Havana's position shifted in June 1975, just as this article was going to press).

The case of the French CP (PCF) is even more intriguing in view of its history of *suivisme*. Under Secretary-General Waldeck Rochet (1964-69), the party had exhibited a mild but perceptible tendency—enhanced by improved relations with the PCI—to take a more independent path from Moscow, particularly when its domestic political interests were concerned; this trend culminated in the PCF's "disapproval" of the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The rule of Georges Marchais from 1969 on brought about a certain "normalization"—a trend back toward support for Soviet positions (though the party's intermittent tendency to give priority to domestic interests did not disappear). In this situation, it is surprising and significant that, since the first feelers were put out over a year and a half ago, the PCF has so far failed to join in the loyalist calls for a new world conference. There appears to have been only one guarded and cautiously qualified reference to the subject, in December 1974.[27]

Most interesting of all, however, has been the extremely cautious approach of the CPSU itself: it still has not come out with a clear, official call for a world conference but has merely expressed "readiness" to join others in organizing one.[28] Indeed, signs of vacillation in the Kremlin and in a

[25] Gianni Corbi, "Europeanism with a Human Face," *L'Espresso* (Rome), Feb. 3, 1974. Segre was head of the foreign section of the PCI Central Committee. The PCI used other means to make its position quietly clear—as when Giuseppe Boffa published in *L'Unità* (Rome) of Dec. 27, 1973, an article on the 80th birthday of Mao Tse-tung, praising his historical stature and exemplary revolutionary achievement.

[26] The first of these conditions, giving any party a virtual right to veto, hardly seemed to square with the second, that the document not be binding; but clearly what mattered here was the obstructive intent, not the inconsistent substance.

[27] On December 8, 1974, *l'Humanite* reported on a speech in which Jean Kanapa said that the PCF and "several" other parties were considering the "opportuneness" of a world conference. But this, he went on, was "a very serious matter, because naturally the conference must be successful. The decision must obviously be taken collectively." He also stressed the need for "careful, democratic preparations." This report appeared in the Paris edition of the party daily—but not in the one which the writer received.

[28] On April 22, 1974, Politburo candidate member Boris Ponomarev referred to calls for a new world conference by other parties and said the CPSU was "ready to take new steps" to promote the "political and ideological unity" of the movement by backing such proposals. (TASS, in English, April 22.) Again, an editorial in *Pravda* (Moscow) in June 1974, fifth anniversary of the 1969 conference, noted that many parties were making proposals for "new, major, joint steps toward further ideological and political consolidation" of the movement, and said the CPSU was "ready to support concrete initiatives" in this direction.

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Boris N. Ponomarev, right, Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party in charge of relations with non-ruling Communist parties, is among those greeting Portuguese Communist chief Alvaro Cunhal in Moscow on October 29, 1974.

—V. Buden for TASS via Sovfoto.

few other East European leaderships have been evident from time to time.[29] Even the fifth anniversary of the previous conference, falling in June 1974, produced no great change in this picture (although an item worth noting was a Hungarian editorial, in *Nepszabadsag* [Budapest] of June 5, which provocatively attacked "reconciliatory, opportunist views proclaiming neutrality" and asserted that the struggle against Maoism was a duty imposed upon the international movement as a whole).

As 1974 wore on, a respectable number of loyalist parties in Western Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia added their pro-conference voices to the Soviet-East European core. But by the fall, a diligent scrutiny could still show only about 30 parties—say, one-third of the international movement—in favor of a world conference, a signally poor performance compared with 1966-67.

This situation has brightened considerably in recent months. In April 1975, eight Arab Communist parties, meeting at an undisclosed place, adopted a resolution that expressed approval of a world conference (*Information Bulletin* [Prague/Toronto], No. 8, 1975). And in mid-June a regional gathering in Havana of the 24 Communist parties of "Latin America and the Caribbean," with the loyalist parties of the US and Canada present as observers, issued a long communiqué that included a collective endorsement of the world conference project as well as a passage sharply attacking the Chinese (*Granma Weekly Review* [Havana], June 22, 1975). These regional endorsements raised the number of parties in favor of the project to around 55—or about two-thirds of the total. Significantly, however, pro-Soviet organs have given little publicity to the Arab and Latin American initiatives, and the CPSU itself has still refrained from issuing a direct, public call for a world gathering—a restraint that suggests Moscow's continued awareness of the obstacles that stand in the way of the kind of conference it wants.

The Pan-European Alternative

Now let us shift the focus from the world to Europe. As we have seen, the first public call for an international conference by Mies of the DKP was linked with a call for an East-West European gathering. Later, loyalist spokesmen frequently maintained the link, referring to a pan-European conference "to be followed by," or as a "useful preparation for," the world meeting. According to the Italians, secret interparty consultations on this related and more practicable project began early in 1973. It took a year and three-quarters for the proposals to surface—undergoing significant change in the process.

One important factor in this development was a new tendency among the West European Communist parties to move toward a greater sense of regional identity and common interests. After secret consultations in the summer of 1973, a preparatory

[29] Such vacillation on the part of the Soviet leadership may have played a part in the fact that Gus Hall of the CPUSA endorsed the conference project on a visit to Moscow in May 1974, while the equally loyalist Gilberto Vieira of Colombia failed to mention it on his visit six weeks later. As for an East European example, on June 20, 1974, a Hungarian Central Committee plenum reiterated its call for a conference but this time added a conditional "when it is timely"; one week later, however, Kádár was linking the call for a conference with the struggle against the Chinese: "The interests of the revolutionary movement make it necessary to unify against the Maoist tendency." See *Nepszabadsag* (Budapest), June 22, 1974, and dispatch of the Hungarian news agency, MTI, June 29, 1974.

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meeting in Stockholm of 18 parties, plus a Dutch observer, decided to hold a regional conference in Brussels in January 1974.[30] That conference revealed a wide diversity of positions—notably on attitudes to the EEC but also on China and on the world conference project, *inter alia*.[31] Yet it also manifested a widely shared concern to coordinate policies on such issues as the political impact of the new economic crisis and the search for alliances with non-Communist forces. This new emphasis on collective regional identity was sustained through a subsequent series of thematic conferences (still going on). The sparse East European coverage of these meetings spoke for itself.

Here we may touch upon another important factor affecting the European parties. In the wake of the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973, Western Europe in general entered a period of transitional crisis which, in its combination of economic and political elements, ominously recalled the 1930's. For the first time in three decades, Communists were able to talk plausibly about "the general crisis of the capitalist system." A new sense of opportunity for Communist advances could be sensed in the air, as some parties (*e.g.*, the Danish and Norwegian) made unexpected political gains, as the leftist alliance in France came within a percentage point of victory in the presidential election, and especially as a tide of unrest and even revolutionary change spread across the Southern flank of the continent, in Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Greece.

An uneven though fairly general increase in Communist militancy was one product of these changes, but the effects on the interparty level were more complex. If the region's transitional troubles gave Western Communist parties a heightened awareness of their own political interests (which were sometimes quite different from those of the Communist regimes), it also revived something of the old triumphalism—a feeling that communism was finally showing its systemic superiority. This in turn encouraged a divergent tendency toward a certain "normalization" of the attitudes of relatively independent parties toward the ruling Communist regimes. The latter tendency varied, however, affecting some parties more than others (*e.g.*, the Belgians rather than the British, and the Norwegians rather than the Swedes), while the Dutch and Icelanders appeared to be immune.

Insofar as they related to Soviet objectives, such shifts in the interparty pattern were generally interesting rather than important. Much more significant, in terms of the Kremlin's hopes of bringing the European parties together at a conference on the themes of détente and political struggle in the West, were the resistive attitudes that had long been displayed by the "southern axis" of two non-ruling and two ruling parties—those of Spain, Italy, Yugoslavia, and Romania.[32] In late September 1974, however, it became known that all four of these parties would take part in a pan-European consultative preparatory meeting, to be held in Warsaw in mid-October; in fact, the meeting was formally convened under the joint sponsorship of the Italian CP and the Polish party.

Without these four—and particularly without the Yugoslav and Romanian parties, which had both boycotted the gathering at Karlovy Vary in 1967—a pan-European conference could obviously not achieve the Soviet goal of a show of international Communist consensus in support of Soviet positions: it would become another demonstration of disunity. But *with* them, how near could Moscow come to its goal?

The Preliminaries at Warsaw

In the first round of talks, the CPSU got the fullest pan-European gathering possible under the circumstances: 28 delegations participated—compared with 24, plus a Swedish observer, at Karlovy Vary. The only (predictable) absentees were the intransigent Albanians, the ultra-independent Dutch, and the isolationist Icelanders.[33] But the Soviet leadership had to pay a price for such a turnout. A first

[30] The Dutch subsequently dropped out altogether, while the Turkish CP came in. The only other absentee was the isolationist Icelandic party. In an interview in *Die Welt* (Hamburg) of December 27, 1973, its leader, Ragnar Arnalds, explained: We do not attend such conferences. . . . Purely Communist conferences are not in accordance with our goals."

[31] See Kevin Devlin, "Differences Behind the Unity Front at Brussels Conference," RFE *Research*, Report No. 1999, Feb. 19, 1971.

[32] A fifth member of the axis, the "Interior" Greek CP, formed after a split in the KKE in 1968, had no interparty weight when it came to the conference question.

[33] Having returned their invitation unopened, the Albanians denounced the "traitorous" Warsaw meeting in editorial in *Zëri i popullit* (Tirana) on October 15. The Dutch announced that they saw no reason to change their policy of boycotting such gatherings, particularly since "in this case there are indications . . . that the objective is . . . to create a platform for a document on the Chinese CP and for practices which can only deepen the rifts in the international Communist movement" (*De Waarheid* [Amsterdam], Oct. 7, 1974). The Chinese ignored all signs of a European gathering just as they ignored the moves for a world conference.

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and large installment apparently was paid just before the Warsaw meeting, when the Spanish CP and the CPSU reached a rapprochement in Moscow talks at which, in the writer's opinion, the more important concessions were made by the Soviets. As for the other three members of the "southern axis," the very fact that the Yugoslavs and Romanians were attending[34] and that the PCI had emerged as the Western convener (a role assumed in 1967 by the loyalist PCF) could be taken as evidence that conditions had been met and concessions made with regard to procedure and agenda, at least for the Warsaw session.

And so it proved. On the eve of the meeting, both the Romanians and the Yugoslavs reaffirmed their independent line. The RCP leadership's statement stressed that there should be no criticism of any parties, present or absent, that no "binding decisions" should be adopted, and that the proceedings throughout should be based on "observance of the independence and sovereignty of all parties" (Radio Bucharest, October 15), while a Yugoslav commentary denied that participation meant Tito's regime was "turning toward the camp" (Radio Zagreb, October 15). The crucial concession, doubtless arranged in advance, came at the start of the Warsaw meeting on October 16: according to Radio Belgrade on that date, the rules of procedure that were adopted covered "those political-procedural problems [*sic*], including the provision for decision-making by consensus, on which the LCY has insisted."[35] If the Yugoslav-Romanian interpretation of this rule was accepted (and the Yugoslavs later said that it was respected in Warsaw and at the subsequent preparatory meeting in Budapest in December [36]), any collective documents or decisions would have to be adopted without opposition—a condition giving the independent parties a virtual right of veto.

Aleksandar Grlickov, Yugoslav Party Secretary in charge of international relations and head of Yugoslavia's delegation in negotiations for the possible convocation of a new conference of European Communist parties.

—Tanjug via Camera Press.

The high point of the Warsaw meeting was provided by Aleksandar Grlickov, the head of the Yugoslav delegation, in a second-day speech which was at once a manifesto of independence and a vigorous statement of the conditions on which the LCY would continue to participate in the project. He went beyond the expected emphasis on equality and noninterference to denounce "tendencies toward hegemony" in the Communist movement.[37] As for the conference itself, he declared that "each party . . . can accept only decisions and positions that are in accord with its policies." Furthermore, any eventual collective document would have to reflect "attitudes and interests truly held in common" (a point also made by the Italian, Gian Carlo

[34] Both the Yugoslavs and the Romanians prepared for the encounter by adopting party documents criticizing "hegemonism"; these were a resolution of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), endorsed at its 10th Congress in April 1974, and a draft program of the Romanian CP published on September 1. The Yugoslavs further strengthened their hand by publicizing the affair of the "Cominformists" in September 1974—five months after the arrest of allegedly pro-Soviet conspirators for plotting against the Tito regime.

[35] Another important procedural agreement was that each party had the right to publicize its own contributions to the debate and also to comment on the progress of the conference project in general—an opportunity which the Yugoslavs exploited with particular skill.

[36] Milika Šundić, Radio Zagreb, Dec. 21, 1974.

[37] In another significant passage, Grlickov stressed Yugoslavia's commitment to oppose imperialism *and all other forms of political and economical subjugation*" (emphasis added). Tanjug, Oct. 17, 1974.

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Pajetta). It is also worth nothing that (according to a PCF spokesman [38]) Grlickov was the only speaker at the Warsaw meeting to mention a *world* conference—and then only to say in a crisp dismissal that "the conditions for holding [it], in our opinion, do not exist."

The Yugoslav emphasis on independence, equality, and "democratic" procedure was echoed, in less abrasive style, by the Romanians [39] and a number of Western delegations, notably the Italian, Spanish, and British. Thus, speaking for the PCI, Pajetta smoothly took it for granted that there would be no attempt to "pass judgment on parties that are not present."

For the CPSU, Boris Ponomarev made a speech of studied reasonableness: apart from his call for "a detailed program of joint action," there was nothing much to alarm the independents.[40] But other loyalist-regime spokesmen (*e.g.,* Bilak of Czechoslovakia and Tellalov of Bulgaria) were more hardline in their emphasis on capitalist-imperialist inequities and the need for disciplined Communist unity. The main groupings (with some Western parties holding intermediate positions) were clear enough.

China was one issue dividing the two groupings. But what effect would this division have on the conference project? In commentaries on the Warsaw meeting, two PCI spokesmen claimed that no one had even mentioned the subject.[41] This, however, does not seem to have been the case. On October 22, the Austrian CP daily *Volksstimme* (Vienna) published part of a Warsaw speech in which party secretary Edwin Scharf spoke of the problem posed by "the policy of the present Chinese CP leadership, especially with regard to its moral-political support of NATO and its stand against détente in Europe." He said that "this issue can hardly be overlooked if one is concerned, as we are, with European problems," but he added that he was against anything resembling "excommunication" and that no one had proposed any such idea. In a *Volksstimme* interview published four days later, Scharf went further. No one had called for a collective condemnation of the Chinese, he repeated; however, he observed that "naturally, no party can be subjected to censorship if its intention is to criticize the attitude of the Chinese CP leadership." The Danish delegate, Ib Noerlund, also unleashed a brief attack on Maoism in Warsaw.[42] At the subsequent Budapest preparatory meeting on December 19-21, at least one further attack on Maoism was made by the Turkish delegate. And in a *Rude Pravo* interview on February 7, Hermann Gautier of the West German DKP announced that his party would raise the question at the conference itself.

The outline of a loyalist tactic could be discerned here. While it seemed certain in advance that it would be impossible to incorporate an explicit condemnation of the Chinese in any final document of a pan-European conference, it also seemed likely that the pro-Soviet delegations would try to exercise the "right" of criticism claimed by Scharf. They could do so either by attacking Peking's *European* policies, as Scharf and Noerlund did, or by following Ponomarev's lead at the Budapest meeting, when he urged the need for the conference to take a firm stand against "all those in Europe *and beyond it* who try, under the flag of anti-communism *and anti-Sovietism,* to weaken socialism's international positions." [43] At most, this approach would produce an uneven chorus of direct and indirect attacks on Maoism, but no collective criticism. Would that limited result be worth jeopardizing the conference project?

An important limiting factor was the Soviet desire to obtain from the conference a platform of support for Moscow's European policies which would be as wide and as firm as possible—and the trouble was that greater width meant less firmness. We have already noted the crucial procedural concessions that had to be made in Warsaw to gain Yugoslav and Romanian participation. Also significant was the rapprochement which the Soviet and Spanish parties reached in Moscow talks held just before the Warsaw meeting; while the communiqué showed that concessions had been made by both sides, the more

[38] Jean Kanapa, *l'Humanité,* Oct. 18, 1974.

[39] Surprisingly, the Romanians did not publish the text of Stefan Andrei's speech in Warsaw, but its substance was underlined in an article by him in *Scinteia* on October 22: "The clear position of the RCP . . . is that . . . each party decides for itself, autonomously, on its entire policy. In this spirit our party could not admit the adoption of, or subscribe to, under any form, a directive document or one containing decisions of a compulsory character."

[40] *Pravda,* Oct. 18, 1974.

[41] Luca Pavolini in *l'Unità,* Oct. 23, 1974, and G. C. Pajetta in *Rinascita,* Oct. 25, 1974.

[42] "Internally, we must further establish . . . that the most aggressive and hate-filled anti-communism is now being spread by the Maoist groups. As we know, the policy of Maoism is also directed against the political objectives which we have gathered here to discuss." *Land og Folk* (Copenhagen), Oct. 29, 1974.

[43] Soviet news agency TASS, Dec. 20, 1974 (emphasis added). This was escalation: at the Warsaw meeting, Ponomarev had spoken only of "anticommunism."

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important ones appeared to have been made by the CPSU.[44]

The need to accommodate the recalcitrant left its mark on the communiqué of the Warsaw meeting. It announced agreement to hold a pan-European conference in East Berlin "no later than mid-1975" on "the struggle for peace, security, cooperation and social progress in Europe." It went on to stress that the proceedings at Warsaw had been "held on a basis of equal rights, respect for the views of all parties, and a desire to achieve a common standpoint," and added—in a key phrase—that the participants "emphasized their will to prepare and conduct the [pan-European] conference in the spirit of these principles" (TASS, October 18, 1974). The possibility that this pledge—*if implemented* (and the proviso was crucial)—would involve something like a genuine interparty debate [45] was strengthened by reports that, in addition to the preparatory sessions proper, thematic seminars on specific subjects would be held.[46] However, it was not until a half-year later that the first two (and so far only) such seminars were held—one in Belgrade (April 9-11, 1975) on the struggle for more just economic relations between Europe and the Third World, and one in Rome (April 19-20) on economic cooperation in Europe. The Yugoslavs used the Belgrade seminar to score some useful interparty points.[47]

Budapest: Toward Confrontation

The first preparatory session proper, held in Budapest on December 19-21, 1974, moved from procedural to substantive concerns, and in the process revealed clear divergences on important issues. These included the central question of what the pan-European conference should undertake to accomplish and especially what kind of document(s) it should adopt. Once more Grlickov of Yugoslavia presented the independent line with the greatest vigor and clarity:

The final document . . . should be such as to enable the participating parties, as well as all other progressive forces, *each working in its own particular conditions, to base their political action directly on* what is acceptable to them *out of the conference's total work. It goes without saying that there is room in the document only for those attitudes and proposals which are* acceptable to all *the participants in the conference. The statement can be prepared and adopted* only on the basis of consensus, *as we agreed at the consultative meeting in Warsaw.*[48]

For the Romanian CP, Stefan Andrei expressed the view that "it would not be absolutely necessary to adopt any document." However, "in the event of consensus, the RCP would agree to the adoption of a single final document—a mobilizing document addressed to the peoples and to the broadest sociopolitical forces." He added that it should express positions common to all, and should not be of a binding or programmatic character.[49]

Against such efforts to "water down" the eventual text in advance, the CPSU stood by the demand expressed by Ponomarev in Warsaw that the conference adopt two documents. The first—primarily by the Communist parties for the Communist parties, so to speak—should "sum up the results of the discussion and set out in detail a program of joint action." The second should "expound our basic ideas and slogans" in appealing for "the cooperation of all left, democratic, peace-loving forces." [50] This re-

[44] See Kevin Devlin, "The CPSU-PCE Rapprochement: Concessions on Both Sides," RFE *Research*, CAA Report No. 2130, Oct. 25, 1974, and "The Independent Spanish CP," RAD Report No. 47, March 13, 1975.

[45] In his Warsaw speech, Pajetta of the PCI said that the conference should bring about, "a free, frank and profound confrontation of opinions among our parties, on the basis of equality, about the problems that are truly common to all the parties . . . a great assize . . . the conclusions of which would be based, as would be the different stages of their elaboration, on the consensus of all the participants." *L'Unità*, Oct. 17, 1974.

[46] According to Luca Pavolini (*ibid*, Oct. 23), proposals for thematic seminars were made in Warsaw by "the Italian, French, Yugoslav, Polish, English, and other delegations." He named three themes suggested by the PCI, while Babiucn of Poland mentioned a proposal that the Yugoslavs should host a seminar on relations with non-Communist forces.

[47] The Yugoslavs put their emphasis on non-Communist forces into practice by inviting a total of 56 European parties—almost half of them Socialist or Social Democratic—plus the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN). Of these, 41 turned up. Because the Socialist Party of Portugal accepted, the Portuguese CP stayed away; and because the independent "Interior" Greek CP came, the "official" KKE did not. The independent-isolationist Dutch and Icelandic CP's, which had boycotted the entire conference project, came to the Belgrade meeting in a demonstrative gesture of support for the Yugoslavs.

[48] Tanjug, Dec. 20, 1974 (emphasis added). Grlickov made no reference to "hegemonism" in Budapest, but some of his remarks were not much less palatable to loyalists—*e.g.*, his demand that the European parties adopt the Algiers action program of the nonaligned countries as the basis for their relations with the Third World.

[49] *Scinteia*, Dec. 22, 1974.

[50] *Pravda*, Oct. 18, 1974.

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turn to the two-level formula of Karlovy Vary was clearly designed to maximize the rallying effect of the main document on the Communist parties—just as the Yugoslav-Romanian call for one, lowest-common-denominator document addressed to all "progressive" forces was designed to minimize that effect.

The main decision taken at the Budapest meeting was directed to this problem but postponed a settlement. An "editorial commission" was set up to work on a first draft of a compromise document. All 28 parties were to be allowed to participate, and (according to a Tanjug report of December 21) their draft would be submitted to the national leaderships; thus, the interm agreement represented two further important concessions by the CPSU and the loyalist parties to the "southern axis." The full commission held its constituent meeting in Budapest on December 21 and was to continue its work in East Berlin.

Sparring Sessions at East Berlin

At this point, a curtain of secrecy descended upon the preparatory process. But despite the effort to avoid publicity, it gradually became clear that a confrontation over the character and content of the main conference document was taking place. On one side were the loyalists, and on the other, a grouping of more or less independent parties—notably the Yugoslav, Romanian, Italian, Spanish, British, and Swedish, probably with varying support from some others (the Belgian, Swiss, and Norwegian, for example).

In *Neues Deutschland* of December 22, Paul Markowski of the SED said that the Editorial Commission would begin its work in East Berlin "at the beginning of next year." A month later, a Yugoslav commentator stated that the commission "is now in session." [51] Another month passed, and then brief and substantially identical reports in various party organs, Eastern and Western, said that a "working group" representing 16 of the 28 parties had held a three-day session in East Berlin (February 17-19), at which there had been "a detailed and constructive exchange of opinions on the character and contents of a final conference document." Significantly, no communiqué was issued.

The second session of the working group, held in East Berlin on April 8-10 with 20 parties present, brought an escalation from confrontation to crisis, produced by a pro-Soviet "counterattack" aimed at regaining on the *substantive* level ground lost through the *procedural* concessions made earlier to the independent grouping. The curtain of secrecy remained in place during the session, but news of this development came shortly afterwards in reports based on Yugoslav sources. As Jean Kanapa of the PCF later confirmed (in a *l'Humanité* interview of April 22), the East German host party presented a draft document which was evidently not the product of consensual discussion. Kanapa suggested that the draft was based upon "all the propositions, ideas and observations formulated since the Warsaw meeting"; however, the Yugoslav sources told a different story. According to the latter, the SED's draft "call[ed] for a joint stand of all Communist parties in their actions and ideology and [did] not make provision for ideological diversity within the movement" [52]—a stance which the sources said the LCY had rejected as unacceptable.

It is clear that the pace of secret interparty diplomacy increased markedly after the April meeting in East Berlin. The few public statements made by Yugoslav spokesmen during this period confirmed that the LCY was continuing to insist that its participation in the conference depended on the fulfillment of certain conditions (consensus, no binding resolutions, no criticism of any party, etc.).[53] The strongest public support for the Yugoslav position came from Secretary-General Santiago Carrillo of the Spanish CP (PCE). In an interview in the Yugoslav paper *Oslobodjenje* (Sarajevo), promptly reprinted in Romania's *Scinteia* of May 1, he expressed firm opposition to "political programs of European Communists, since such (common) programs would involve gross interference in the internal affairs of a country" and would also present the danger that nonruling parties "might become merely an instrument for the policies of the socialist countries." What the PCE (like the LCY) wanted was a consensual "general platform, which can be adopted not only by the Communist and Workers' parties but by the entire progressive Left."

[51] C. Vuckovic in *Review of International Affairs* (Belgrade) Jan. 20, 1975.

[52] UPI dispatch from Belgrade, citing local party sources, April 18, 1975.

[53] See especially the interview which Stane Dolanc, Secretary of the LCY Presidium's Executive Committee, gave to the daily *Delo* (Ljubljana) and the weekly *Vjesnik u srijedu* (Zagreb), both of April 30, 1975.

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At the same time, there were some indications that the process of preparatory bargaining was not over—that the loyalist majority, having carried out its counterattack, might again make some tactical concessions. Thus, in the *l'Humanité* interview cited above, Jean Kanapa said of the ongoing editorial discussion:

Naturally, each party can discuss and make amendments in full freedom and full equality of rights. . . . The gamut of observations is already very wide, and we are far from having reached a final draft!

More significant was a distinctly placatory interview in which Hermann Axen of the SED Politburo said that the drafting sessions, marked by "fraternity and frankness," had produced "a large quantity of ideas about the content, structure and form" of the document. Delegates had shown the will to strive for "the necessary collective agreement" in drawing it up. Noting that every party was autonomous, he added blandly: "Naturally, it cannot and will not be the duty of the conference to lay down concrete tasks for each party." [54]

Early in May, "informed sources" in various capitals reported that another editorial meeting was to begin in East Berlin on May 12. A little later came similarly unconfirmed word of a further development —the formation of a smaller, "balanced" subcommittee of eight parties to seek a compromise agreement on the document. This was said to consist of four independent parties (Yugoslavia, Romania, Italy, and Spain) and four loyalist ones (the Soviet Union, East Germany, France, and Denmark). Western news agencies reported from East Berlin that the meeting did begin on May 12 but could not clarify whether it involved this smaller subcommittee or the wider "working group." Several accounts stated that the Yugoslavs were not present (while one said that they turned up but withdrew on the second day); it was also reported that the LCY had submitted a counterdraft to set against the East German text.

Officially, not a word was said about all this, but it was clear enough that the conference project had entered a crucial stage and that the heart of the matter was Yugoslav resistance to a loyalist counterattack based on the "general line" of the East German draft. On May 14, Grlickov flew to Moscow for four days of talks, following up with a visit to Bucharest. The tempo was evidently mounting toward a climax: Would the LCY representatives implement their repeated threat to withdraw if their conditions were not met (leaving their allies in an exposed position)? Or would the loyalist bloc make sufficient concessions to keep the Yugoslavs in (in which case the CPSU would have expended much energy for relatively little interparty gain)?

As of the date of writing, this question has not been answered. In any case, the conceptual division between independents and loyalists, while analytically useful, is too procrustean for the complex realities of interparty evolution. Thus, the Yugoslavs have tended to stress what they will not accept, while the Romanians and the Italians (who may have tried to play a mediatory role) have favored a complementary but less abrasive emphasis on what they want from the conference. Again, the position of the French CP, long considered unconditionally loyalist, has been increasingly affected by domestic political interests. In mid-May, the PCF issued a statement contending that the central issue in the preparatory discussions was not a confrontation between "centralizers" and "autonomists" but rather between those who sought to combine détente with resolute struggle against imperialism, and those who would "go easy on imperialism, for the sake of diplomatic considerations or domestic opportunities." The statement indicated that the PCF stood by the first thesis but suggested that "several European parties already building socialism" supported the latter. The French Communists "absolutely excluded" the possibility that they "would associate themselves with a document which sows confusion with regard to this [issue]." [55]

It could perhaps be said in summation that the main dividing line in this ongoing controversy runs between parties (generally pro-Soviet) which seek to bring about a closing of ideological ranks through the conference and those (notably the Yugoslavs and Italians[56]) which argue that the conference must

[54] East Germany's news agency, ADN, May 2, 1975.

[55] *l'Humanité*, May 14, 1975.

[56] After the Budapest meeting a Yugoslav commentator wrote: "It is clear that this conference cannot be an ideological but rather only a political conference—that is, it can only be a consultation about concrete political actions but cannot make any assessments about the national policies of the individual parties, because it would be impossible to find a common denominator for such assessments. A basic agreement has been reached about the political nature of the conference, even though attempts have been made, and will likely be made again, to make it also at least in part an ideological conference." Janez Stanič in *Delo*, Dec. 28, 1974.

[57] *Information Bullentin* (Prague), No. 20-21, 1974, p. 52.

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function on the level of practical political issues and not on that of ideology. But it is not always easy to say on which side of the line a particular party stands.

Overall Prospects

Meanwhile, the loyalist calls for a world conference have continued, though sporadically, and they have usually been linked with attacks on Maoism. As mentioned earlier, two important developments occurred in April and June of this year, when first the eight Arab Communist parties and then the 24 Latin American parties gave their collective support to the project at regional gatherings. Taken in conjunction with the preparations for a pan-European meeting, these new developments strengthen the impression that the Soviets hope to pave the way for a new world conference through a series of regional conferences.

Yet, with the admittedly important exception of the Cuban regime's entry into the loyalist ranks, not so very much has in fact changed in the interparty picture, since the Middle Eastern and Latin American parties have always been "safe precincts," as far as the Kremlin is concerned. The CPSU's continued caution reflects its awareness of the serious obstacles that remain in the way of a global conference, particularly in the Asian and European sectors of communism. In Europe, the independent parties which are in confrontation with the loyalists over a pan-European document are also opposed to or at least distrustful of a world conference, and on this issue they are joined by some others—notably, and unprecedentedly, the French CP. In Asia, the recent Communist victories in Indochina have brought new "independent-neutralist" regimes in Cambodia, in South Vietnam, and perhaps soon in Laos, which will be no more disposed to attend a new Moscow conference than the North Vietnamese, the Koreans, the Japanese, and the region's pro-Chinese parties.

Still, in their efforts to shepherd the fraternal parties toward a European conference (as the minimum goal) and then toward a world conference, the Soviet leaders have several important advantages. One is that the time has indeed become ripe for a collective reassessment (however distorted by ideological triumphalism) of the radical changes that have occurred in national, regional, and global situations since 1969. Moreover, the divisive impact of some formerly controversial issues—notably Czechoslovakia but also, to some extent, the Sino-Soviet conflict—has faded, at a time when Communist triumphs in Indochina and socio-economic crises in neocapitalist countries encourage the Communist parties to reaffirm their status as members of *the* world revolutionary movement.

The importance which Communists in general attach to continuity, legitimation, and precedent is another significant factor—but one which has both positive and negative aspects, as far as the CPSU's efforts to reassert its influence and authority (where possible) in the international movement are concerned. The limiting precedents established at the 1969 Moscow conference will surely apply to any future international gathering. Similarly, the *conditional* Yugoslav participation in the European conference project has already ensured that the qualitative difference between the Karlovy Vary and East Berlin conferences will be as marked as that between the Moscow meetings of 1960 and 1969. And the Yugoslavs are not alone in their vigilant alertness to the Soviet tendency to accept new wineskins and then try to fill them with a diluted version of the same old wine.

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North Vietnam Since Ho

By David W. P. Elliott

For three decades since the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) in 1945 and especially for the 20 years since the defeat of French colonial power in Vietnam in 1954, the leaders of Vietnam's revolutionary movement have exercised control over only a part of Vietnam. Consequently, they have often had to balance the rapid achievement of economic and political development in the northern portions of Vietnam against progress toward the attainment of their revolutionary aims in the southern portions.

With the recent decisive victory of the revolutionary forces in South Vietnam, the most difficult policy dilemmas created for the DRV leaders by the division of Vietnam have now been resolved. Many problems relating to the pace and scope of unification of the political and administrative systems of North and South Vietnam remain, but decisions on these matters can now, for the first time, be made without reference to the actions of external forces. In short, the policy environment in which future decisions about North-South relationships will be taken is today entirely controlled by the DRV leaders and their supporters in the South. This was not always the case. During the 1965-73 period particularly, the United States was heavily involved in the Vietnam war, and the North Vietnamese leaders saw their policy decisions largely as emergency responses to the initiatives of an aggressive external power.

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Nevertheless, one cannot understand the internal evolution of North Vietnam over the years without placing it in the context of this central question of priorities. The present article will explore the domestic political situation in North Vietnam since the death of Chairman Ho Chi Minh in 1969 by focusing on the debate arising from this issue, its resolution, and the insights that it affords into the political system of North Vietnam.

The Background

After the 1954 Geneva accords that ended French colonial rule in Indochina, the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had to deal with the problem of balancing revolutionary and developmental aims in the framework of a Communist North Vietnam and a non-Communist South Vietnam. In arriving at decisions about the proper balance, Hanoi faced hard choices not only with respect to the allocation of scarce resources but also with regard to internal DRV policies as well.

Until the introduction of US combat forces into South Vietnam in early 1965, the direct involvement of the DRV there was slight.[1] At the same time, there is some evidence that during the 1950's the DRV moved with cautious deliberation in carrying out political consolidation and economic development because the Hanoi leadership feared that too rapid social and economic evolution would make reunification with the South more difficult.[2] This

[1] Official American estimates of the order of battle as of April 1965 listed one confirmed battalion of North Vietnamese troops in the South. See *Pentagon Papers* (Senator Gravel edition), Boston, Beacon Press, 1971, Vol. 3, p. 392.

[2] For example, the poltical "excesses" of the land reform in the North (*i.e.*, the misclassification of cadre and peasants into landlord *(cont. on p. 36)*

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policy was abandoned by 1959, however, when it became apparent that reunification would require a protracted guerrilla struggle. Although the DRV devoted greater attention to the problems of the South after that juncture, it was also preparing to embark on and subsequently implementing its First Five-Year Plan (1961-65), and the Central Committee of the Lao Dong (Workers') Party underscored the necessity of "correctly solving the relationship between economic construction and the consolidation of national defense."[3]

Circumstances altered considerably with the direct involvement of the United States in the war in the South. The Hanoi leaders clearly regarded the US military intervention as outside interference in a situation turning increasingly favorable to revolutionary forces in the South, and they had to decide to what extent they should try to match the US forces and materiel from their own resources. This issue became a matter of intense debate among them for a number of years.

Although the "great debate" between those DRV leaders favoring a relatively higher level of support of the war effort in the South and those advocating more attention to economic and political development in the North was prolonged and intense, there is no evidence that the goal of insuring a revolutionary victory in the South was ever in contention.[4] Rather, the argument concerned the level and type of support for the war in the South and the extent to which the North Vietnamese economy could be reshaped to meet short-term production needs without jeopardizing attainment of the long-term objective of building and expanding a socialist economy. General Van Tien Dung expressed the DRV leaders' general perception of the policy problem in a 1974 article. He wrote:

There are times when we have to concentrate our capabilities to build and develop the economy, while at the same time we must still strengthen national defense. At other times, because of the urgency of the situation, we must concentrate our maximum efforts to fulfill every requirement of national defense and of the war, but still have to strive to build and develop the economy.[5]

Moreover, from Hanoi's standpoint, pursuit of a revolutionary victory in the South and pursuit of the aim of building up the North did not always involve direct trade-offs because the resources required for the North often differed from those needed in the South; furthermore, the resource demands on the North for revolutionary activities in the South were not excessive. According to testimony to the US Senate in 1967 by US Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, the quantity of externally-furnished materials, other than food, required to supply Communist forces in the South was under 100 tons a day, "a quantity that could be transported by a few trucks."[6]

Finally, to the degree that simultaneous pursuit of the two objectives did create a competition for scarce resources, the DRV managed to alleviate the problem with Soviet and Chinese aid. (It should be noted that while reliance on such aid entailed political obligations, there is little indication that these obligations dictated North Vietnam's policy course. This course was set by Hanoi's leaders on the basis of the evolution of the war and the inventory of resources that they had at their disposal. Robert Shaplen has reported, presumably on the basis of diplomatic information, that Prime Minister Pham Van Dong traveled secretly to Moscow in the critical year of 1966 and "obtained the Russians' pledge of continued military and economic aid, as

and rich-peasant categories) were brought to a halt in late 1956 (and later rectified) when it had become apparent that the elections provided for in the 1954 Geneva agreements would not take place. A subsequent official account of the land reform criticized the "leftist errors" of the initial period and asserted that they had been corrected by a policy designed "to consolidate the North while taking the South into consideration" by broadening the national united front. See Tran Phuong, "The Land Reform," *Pages of History, Vietnamese Studies*, No. 7, Hanoi, n.d., p. 189. In addition, North Vietnam's committee to write a new Constitution, which was formed in 1956, did not produce a formal draft until late 1959. A letter to the party newspaper before it finally appeared noted that "some people" had suggested that it ought not to contain any mention of the leadership of the working class in order to appeal to intellectuals in the "upper classes" in South Vietnam. See *Nhan Dan* (Hanoi), June 16, 1959.

[3] *Ibid.*, Sept. 12, 1960.

[4] Indeed, the DRV leadership has always viewed the liberation of the South and the building of socialism in the North as essentially complementary objectives. As one writer has remarked, some Western analysts "assume that the DRV's choices are limited to allocating resources to socialist construction in the North or the war in the South. However, in party doctrine and in practice, these goals are not mutually exclusive. . . . The 'setting of priorities' has always been a question of determining how best to use resources in complementary fashion to achieve these two goals, which themselves are believed to be mutually reinforcing on the strategic level." See William S. Turley, "The Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the 'Third Stage' of Its Revolution," *Asian Survey* (Berkeley, Cal.), January 1974, pp. 78-79.

[5] "Some Matters Concerning Coordinating Economic Construction and Strengthening National Defense," *Nhan Dan*, Dec. 17, 1974.

[6] Testimony reprinted in Wesley R. Fishel, Ed., *Vietnam: Anatomy of a Conflict*, Itasca, Ill., F. E. Peacock Publishing, Inc., 1968, p. 44.

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Parties to the "great debate" over North Vietnamese priorities, pictured in 1969: from the left, Truong Chinh, head of the departments of party history and legislation of the Vietnam Workers' Party and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly; VWP First Secretary Le Duan; and VWP chairman Ho Chi Minh (who was to die later that year).

—Wide World.

well as their approval of Hanoi's peace plan. Le Duan simultaneously headed a delegation to Peking; not unexpectedly he ran into trouble when the Chinese insisted that the North Vietnamese continue fighting indefinitely. . . . However, the North Vietnamese in Peking stuck to their proposed timetable."[7] In 1972, a DRV official acknowledged to Joseph Kraft that "Hanoi has lost some political support from Moscow and Peking," but according to Kraft, "in the same breath he said that 'what counts is material support'." That, he concluded, was still continuing.[8])

The "great debate" proceeded in several stages. Its first phase lasted from 1965 to 1968. During this phase, the direct costs to the North of support for the war in the South were quite heavy, especially in terms of manpower losses in industry and agriculture, the high turnover rate of local cadres in agricultural cooperatives, and the loss of life and facilities inflicted by US bombing.[9] Nonetheless, there seems to have been broad agreement among the Hanoi leaders on the necessity of incurring these costs. At the same time, some of them apparently found the indirect costs of supporting the war in the South troubling. These costs included the relaxation of state control over many sectors of the economy, resulting both from choice and from circumstances which dictated the use of incentives and profits to maximize immediate production and alleviate the pressure on the DRV's managerial resources, already strained by the burdens of coping with the bombing assaults. While this temporary expedient met the urgent requirements of the moment, there was high-level concern that the attendant damage to the DRV's socialist system might prove to be permanent.[10]

Ho's Legacy

During the final months of Ho Chi Minh's life, the debate entered a second stage. The Tet Offensive of early 1968 in South Vietnam had accomplished its major strategic goal of convincing the United States that military victory was impossible without massive new inputs of American troops and that alternative ways of terminating the conflict had to be found. As Henry Kissinger, subsequently Special Assistant for National Security Affairs to President Nixon, later observed:

This realization caused Washington, for the first time, to put a ceiling on the number of troops for Vietnam. . . . This made inevitable an eventual commitment to a political solution and marked the beginning of the quest for a negotiated settlement.[11]

[7] *The Road From War*, New York, Harper and Row, 1970, p. 225.

[8] Joseph Kraft, "Hanoi's Communism," *The Washington Post*, July 25, 1972. For a more detailed discussion of this question, see D. W. Elliott, *NLF-DRV Strategy and the 1972 Spring Offensive*, IREA Project, Interim Report No. 4, Cornell University, January 1974, pp. 28-30.

[9] In his 1967 testimony to the US Senate (*loc. cit.*), Secretary McNamara observed that the "diversion of some 500,000 people in a society already strained to maintain a marginal subsistence," necessitated by the damage from bombing, "is a severe penalty." The economic losses that the North (a country with an annual GNP of $1,700 million) suffered from the US bombing were estimated to be in excess of $370 million in late 1967, or, as one study put it, "it is about the same as if $200 *billion* in physical damage had been inflicted on the US." See Raphael Littauer and Norman Uphoff, Eds., *The Air War in Indochina*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1972, p. 147.

[10] See Truong Chinh, "Let Us Be Grateful to Karl Marx and Follow the Path Traced by Him," commemorating the 150th birthday of Marx, *Nhan Dan*, Sept. 16, 1968, trans. in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Asia and the Pacific* (Washington, DC), Supplement No. 45, Oct. 2, 1968; also Truong Chinh, "Weaknesses, Shortcomings and Mistakes in Agricultural Cooperatives," trans. in United States Mission in Vietnam (JUSPAO), *Documents and Research Notes* (Saigon), No. 63, July 1969.

[11] Henry A. Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy*, New York, Norton, 1969, pp. 107-08.

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With a ceiling set on the resources that the United States would commit to the war and with the cessation of US bombing of the North, there now existed a prospect that the drain that the war had been imposing on DRV resources would level off as well. Therefore, Ho evidently decided to lay the groundwork for according internal construction in North Vietnam a higher priority than it had enjoyed in the immediately preceding years, although the war in the South still retained first claim on DRV resources.

Ho's role in upgrading the priority of construction in the North is not altogether clear. Sometime in 1968, Ho's failing health became a matter of concern to his colleagues, and the Politburo proposed that, in order to conserve his declining strength, he "only preside over the most important party and state matters, while other matters would be discussed by the Politburo and then reported to Uncle [Ho]."[12] Moreover, in his last years Ho reportedly expressed a feeling of restlessness and a sense of unfulfilled mission, and he spoke of his strong desire to visit the South. His intense concern about the South undoubtedly strengthened the position of those arguing for a continuing, all-out emphasis on the war in the South.[13]

Nevertheless, there is substantial evidence that

[12] Le Van Luong, "The Last Years of Uncle Ho," *Nhan Dan*, May 19, 1973.

[13] *Ibid.* It should be noted, however, that when Politburo members suggested to Ho that the DRV might possibly launch a major effort to finish off the war quickly so that he could visit the South, he replied: "I want to go now. What good is it to go only after victory is achieved?" This reply could not be construed as a mandate for the DRV to throw all resources into an attempt to gain a rapid victory.

[14] See *The New York Times*, March 5, 1969.

[15] On the character of the 1973 agreements, see the texts in *The Department of State Bulletin* (Washington, DC), Feb. 12, 1973, pp. 169-88. In May 1969, one month prior to the formation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam had issued a 10-point program in Paris. This program, according to *The New York Times* (May 9, 1969), had aroused "intense official [US] interest" because "it appears to be the first offer to collaborate with the current leaders in a coalition government." The formation of the PRG reflected this diplomatic shift and gave the NLF an institutional entity with which to participate in a future coalition of South Vietnamese political forces.

[16] Resolution 9 of the Central Office for South Vietnam (July 1969) modified DRV-NLF strategy in the post-Tet period. This resolution reflected a lesser reliance on military measures, and a correspondingly greater reliance on political measures, than had previously been the case. COSVN's Directive 01 (1971), incidentally, marked the apogee of the "stand-down strategy." For further analysis and sources of translations of these documents, see Elliott, *NLF-DRV Strategy and the 1972 Spring Offensive*.

[17] For an account of the meeting, which took place on Aug. 15, 1969, see Trinh Dinh Thao's article in *Nhan Dan*, May 18, 1974.

The late Ho Chi Minh, left, shown on April 24, 1969, as he welcomes Dr. Phung Van Cung, leader of a delegation of the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front to Hanoi.

—AFP via Pictorial.

Ho himself established the main guidelines for handling the question of DRV policy priorities in the changed situation. From late February to late March 1969, the first official high-level delegation of the National Liberation Front to visit the DRV in six years, led by the NLF Vice-President Phung Van Cung, toured North Vietnam,[14] and the press gave prominent play to Ho's attentions to the delegation. It was probably not coincidental that the Provisional Revolutionary Government was formed in June 1969, marking a major shift in the diplomatic strategy of the Vietnamese Communists. This move ultimately led to the promulgation of a concept of "two administrations, two armed forces, and two zones of control" that provided the political basis of the peace agreements concluded in Paris in 1973 by the DRV, the PRG, the Republic of South Vietnam, and the United States.[15] Along with the formation of the PRG, there were efforts to stabilize and ultimately scale down the relatively high level of warfare in the South.[16] Ho's last public meeting prior to his death was with a Southern delegation, and his last policy review concerned that meeting.[17]

During 1968-69, too, "socialist construction" was upgraded in both agriculture and industry. In the latter case, an effort was made to concentrate on building decentralized regional industry that would be less vulnerable to air attacks in the event that

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these resumed. At the same time, Hanoi instituted a major program of tightening up the "socialist management" of agricultural cooperatives. This program clearly constituted an "important party and state matter" and must have had Ho's approval.

Truong Chinh, Chairman of the National Assembly Standing Committee and third-ranking member of the Politburo (after Ho, the Party Chairman, and Le Duan, the Party First Secretary), launched the program in late 1968 by issuing a strong critique of the management of agricultural cooperatives.[18] His remarks revealed that the exigencies of war had forced the DRV to relax its system of "socialist management" in this sphere. Not only had the war drained away manpower, especially young people, from the cooperatives to serve in the army, but it had also engendered a disruptively high rate of turnover among local cadres.[19] Because of the resultant weaknesses of management, the "three contracts" (production quota, production expenses, and labor costs) had often been assigned directly to individual families rather than to production teams, as had been the case earlier. In many instances, collective land had been appropriated for private use. While such expedients had maintained an acceptable level of agricultural production, they amounted, in Truong Chinh's view, to a dangerous retreat from socialist principles, and he specifically criticized the idea "that production can be done in any way, provided the social product increases."[20]

By April 1969, a new statute for agricultural management in higher-level cooperatives had been drawn up under Truong Chinh's guidance. This was the first major new document related to agriculture since the statute on the organization and management of lower-level cooperatives in 1960.[21]

Prior to Ho's death on September 3, 1969, then, the DRV had laid down the broad outlines of a revised approach to the relative priority of revolution in the South and socialist construction in the North. The formation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam had created the basis for possible negotiation of a settlement of the war in the South, and the establishment of a ceiling on the demands of the war in the South on the manpower and material resources of the North had opened the way for Hanoi to address systematically the issues of planning and management of a socialist economy in the North.

Post-Ho Policy Disagreements

Translating the decision to give more attention to the task of building socialism in North Vietnam into specific programs stimulated further debate among the DRV leaders. The policy debate during the period immediately after Ho's death was complicated by the DRV's first political succession and the inevitable problem of defining new authority relationships among Ho's closest associates. In general terms, Party First Secretary Le Duan favored a policy of continuing the highest possible level of support for the war in South Vietnam, while Truong Chinh wanted to place more emphasis on socialist construction in the North.

In early October 1969, Truong Chinh delivered a speech to the staff of *Bao Anh Viet-Nam* (Vietnam Pictorial) in which he complained that "since 1966, *Vietnam Pictorial* has shown a definite preference for subjects on the national salvation struggle, never or scarcely dealing with subjects on socialist construction."[22] The next issue of the magazine published served to underline his point by devoting its pages exclusively to the 25th anniversary of the People's Army and the Army's role in the "national salvation struggle," but the issue also contained an insert, dated November 1969, announcing the elec-

[18] Truong Chinh, "Weaknesses, Shortcomings and Mistakes . . .," *loc. cit.*

[19] See *ibid.*, pp. 5 and 9. In the second passage just cited, Truong Chinh attributed the high rate of turnover to "the requirements of the front and shortcomings in the cooperative cadres' management." Thus, it is possible that some agricultural cadres were removed for such "shortcomings" and not just mobilized for other tasks.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 9. It should be pointed out that there is some evidence that not all the North Vietnamese leaders agreed with Truong Chinh's judgment on this matter, in discussing the handicraft cooperatives in the spring of 1970. For instance, Le Duan maintained that "cooperatives can only be consolidated when their production has been accelerated." See *Nhan Dan*, April 11, 1970.

[21] The 1960 statute had been supplemented by the important decisions of the Fifth Plenum of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee in July 1961. For the text of the original statute and the decisions of the Fifth Plenum, see "Agricultural Problems," *Vietnamese Studies* (Hanoi), No. 2, 1964, pp. 154-77. The statute on higher-level agricultural cooperatives, dated April 18, 1969, was not publicly released until August 1969. A "detailed" draft of regulations for such cooperatives, "based on" the 1969 document, was issued in 1974. See *Nhan Dan*, Oct. 3, 1974.

[22] Speech on the 15th anniversary of the initial publication of *Bao Anh Viet-Nam*, as broadcast by Radio Hanoi, Oct. 19, 1969, and translated in FBIS, *op. cit.*, Oct. 25, 1969. Truong Chinh, it should be underscored, left no doubt about the policy implications of his complaint. He went on to say: ". . . *Vietnam Pictorial* has not firmly grasped the revolutionary lines and realities in our country. A number of its editions only carried anti-US national salvation items, as if they were published in the Southern liberated areas."

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Vo Nguyen Giap, Minister of Defense of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Charles Bonnay/Black Star.

tion of the new President and Vice-President of the DRV, giving prominent coverage to Truong Chinh (in his capacity as head of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly, the forum for the election), and picturing a group of touring Southerners viewing the progress of socialist construction in the North.

Not long thereafter, Truong Chinh presided over a partial reorganization of the governmental economic bureaucracy. The Ministry of Heavy Industry was split up into a Ministry of Power and Coal, a Ministry of Mechanical Engineering and Metallurgy, and a General Chemical Department. In recognition of the problem of supply and distribution of food, a separate Ministry of Food and Foodstuffs was created. The General Department of Materials was also upgraded to a Ministry.[23]

This reorganization suggested that the Hanoi leadership planned to press ahead with the rebuilding of the DRV economy. That impression was reinforced by developments in early 1970. In January, North Vietnam's leaders indicated that they believed they should now try to accumulate capital and raise the depressed wartime standard of living, and that these goals would necessitate increased production of food and consumer goods, including non-essentials.[24] The following month, the head of the new Ministry of Power and Coal led a delegation to France to investigate the prospects for technical cooperation.[25]

Expanding the production of consumer goods would, of course, recreate facilities that would be economic hostages to bombing and thus provide the United States with fresh leverage on the North if Washington chose to exploit the situation. In a major speech in February 1970, Le Duan presented a plan to minimize this problem. He announced that light industry would continue to be decentralized. Each province would be considered "a strategic unit . . . in combat as well as production," and "the central economy will be strengthened step by step on the basis of developing the initiatives and capabilities of various regions."[26]

That same speech also contained evidence that Le Duan disagreed with Truong Chinh about the degree to which the situation in the South permitted devoting greater attention to the building of socialism in the North. In contrast to Truong Chinh's earlier call for an intensification of "long-term plans for the development of the economy and culture of the country in the future,"[27] Le Duan advocated flexibility and improvisation. He cautioned that "we must pay great attention to short-range plans which are proper . . . for achieving victory in each phase," and that "under the present situation of our national economy special attention must be paid to yearly plans and to leadership over the monthly and even daily struggles, because these are concrete actions bringing about appropriate results."[28]

In addition, Le Duan took a position with respect to production quite different from that of Truong Chinh. Truong Chinh had consistently stressed the underlying ideological implications of policy action and the need to consolidate the relations of production by strengthening the collective forms of agricultural organization; furthermore, he had expressed

[23] Vietnam News Agency report on the meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly, Dec., 9, 1969, in FBIS, *op. cit.*, Dec. 9, 1969.

[24] Radio Hanoi, Jan. 19, 1970, in *ibid.*, Jan. 20, 1970.

[25] *Le Monde* (Paris), Feb. 21, 1970.

[26] "Under the Glorious Party Banner for Independence, Freedom and Socialism, Let Us Advance and Achieve New Victories," *Nhan Dan*, Feb. 14, 1970. For an English translation, see FBIS, *op. cit.*, Supplement, March 5, 1970.

[27] "Let Us Be Grateful to Karl Marx . . . ," *loc. cit.*

[28] "Under the Glorious Party Banner . . . ," *loc. cit.*

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great concern about the possibility of "capitalist restoration" if the "relations of production" were not soon consolidated.[29] Le Duan, on the other hand, underscored the necessity of expanding the forces of production, even if this required a temporary departure from collective management.[30] He warned that "if we overestimate the influence of exploiting classes and the counterrevolutionary forces, and if we only concern ourselves with quelling them while losing sight of the essential task of organizing, promoting and carrying out the three revolutions, we would commit a serious error." With "only revolutionary enthusiasm," he said, "the most we can do is to eliminate the old; but not be able to build a new society."[31]

Several factors lent particular weight to Le Duan's words in the decisions of the DRV leadership on policy priorities. His comprehensive policy review in the February 1970 speech underlined his emergence as the principal spokesman for the collective leadership of the Party Politburo. Moreover, in his capacity as First Secretary, he held the key statutory post in the ruling party (since Ho's position as Party Chairman remained unfilled), and as head of the Party Secretariat, he controlled the practical implementation of policy. Indeed, in the months following the February 1970 speech less effort was devoted to the implementation of the 1969 statute on agricultural cooperatives. A few years later, after the Paris peace agreements of 1973, North Vietnamese sources disclosed that this statute had not been strictly applied during the early 1970's.[32]

In January 1971, the DRV finally took a tentative step toward the institution of major programs of socialist construction. At that time, the 19th Plenum of the Party Central Commitee passed a resolution that established the basis for a recentralization of economic management and a tightening-up of the administration of agricultural cooperatives.[33] This resolution, in effect, embodied a compromise between the two positions set forth by Truong Chinh and Le Duan. While it significantly upgraded the priority to be attached to the building of socialism in the North, it made clear that production for prosecution of the war in the South would take precedence if future events seemed to warrant it.[34]

The Limits of Debate

Although there were significant differences between the top DRV leaders on the question of policy priorities during the 1969-71 period, the political debate on this issue cannot be regarded as a manifestation of a power struggle between organized opinion groups or personal factions among the North Vietnamese leaders. The great importance of establishing proper national priorities at a perilous moment in Vietnamese history must certainly have made the debate intense during these years; however, no systematic and documented evidence of the existence of organized opinion groups in the upper echelons of the North Vietnamese hierarchy has ever been presented.

In the 1960's, some Western academic observers of the North Vietnamese scene professed to have discerned the outlines of factional groupings within the Politburo, but the kaleidoscopic shifts of these alignments raised serious doubt as to the validity of such speculation.[35] US government analysts noted

[29] See, for example, "Let Us Be Grateful to Karl Marx . . .," *loc. cit.*, p. 46, and "Weaknesses, Shortcomings and Mistakes . . .," *loc. cit.*

[30] This theme, it should be noted, has been consistently advanced by Le Duan since the initial period of North Vietnam's agricultural cooperativization in the late 1950's. In a recent typical formulation of his views, he said: "If the cooperatives are built up just to have new relations of production, but new forces of production are not immediately created, the cooperatives cannot possibly be solid." See *Nhan Dan*, Oct. 2, 1974.

[31] "Under the Glorious Banner . . .," *loc. cit.*

[32] A 1974 *Nhan Dan* editorial complained that "in many places the cooperatives are declining, and some cooperatives have disintegrated or are operating in appearance only." See "Correctly Implement the Agricultural Cooperative Statute," *Nhan Dan*, March 12, 1974. Truong Chinh attributed this situation to the fact that "many agricultural producers' cooperatives did not correctly carry out the Summary Cooperative Statute" and to other related problems such as the lack of a land-use law to correct private encroachments on public land and, again, the high turnover in village leadership positions. See *ibid.*, Feb. 27, 1974.

[33] The text of Resolution 19 can be found in *ibid.*, Feb. 2, 1971. That this resolution marked a turning point in DRV policy is attested by the fact that even in 1973 its dissemination was still referred to as "an especially important matter." See *ibid.*, Sept. 6, 1973. In recent major policy speeches of North Vietnamese leaders, Resolution 19 is coupled with Resolution 22 (to be discussed later), passed in February 1974 following the Paris cease-fire agreement in 1973.

[34] Although the main focus of Resolution 19 was on economic reconstruction, the Plenum decision was made with the proviso that the DRV would "always meet the requirements of the resistance completely and promptly, and resolutely fulfill the duty of the great rear area to the great front line." *Ibid.*, Feb. 2, 1971.

[35] The most notable of these observers were P. J. Honey and Bernard Fall. A basic flaw in their analysis lay in the assumption that political groupings could be defined in terms of the orientation of specific DRV leaders toward Peking or Moscow, respectively. It is now generally acknowledged that the North Vietnamese leaders, rather than dividing their allegiances between the USSR and China, skillfully exploited the Sino-Soviet dispute for North Vietnamese purposes—particularly in the period after 1965.

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that information available on the subject was scanty and concluded that no organized factions within the DRV leadership could be identified.[36]

Ho's death, to be sure, introduced new elements into the situation. Political succession following the demise of a regime's founder involves special problems in defining the boundaries of the new political order, and such problems were inherent in the succession to Ho. Ho, as founder and symbol of the legitimacy of North Vietnam's political system and as Chairman of the Party Central Committee,[37] towered above his colleagues. Thus, he could serve as adviser and conciliator to the other members of the Politburo. Party First Secretary Le Duan, in contrast, stood as only first among equals. Hence, the removal of the centerpiece of the DRV political system necessitated a process of mutual adjustment among the leaders, and this involved a redefinition of decision-making procedures, the acceptable limits of debate, and the sanctions for authoritative decisions.

Nonetheless, there is little reliable information that personal or "patron-client" ties to either Truong Chinh or Le Duan existed at the time of Ho's departure from the political scene or have emerged since among the other Politburo members, or that any bloc of Politburo members has consistently supported the policy views of either of the two major leaders. Furthermore, there are several factors which have acted as strong impediments to any possible development of factions in the post-Ho era.

First, the broad lines of North Vietnam's policy during the remainder of the war had been laid down prior to Ho's death and had been approved by him. Hence, any efforts to put together a faction advocating measures that substantially diverged from those guideposts would have been politically unfeasible.

Second, Ho left behind him a unified party and a collective leadership,[38] and there appears to have been broad recognition among the DRV hierarchy that the outside world would view any signs of disunity as evidence of Hanoi's flagging determination to pursue its goal of liberating the South, and that such a conviction would serve to harden the position of the DRV's opponents. In the fall of 1969, for example, Truong Chinh said:

Our enemies fancy that after President Ho Chi Minh's death we will be bewildered and divided, or will depart from his revolutionary line. But they are grossly mistaken. . . . We are determined to carry out President Ho Chi Minh's testament and the pledges solemnly made on behalf of our entire party and people by comrade Le Duan in Ba Dinh Square, at the ceremony in memory of President Ho Chi Minh.[39]

In this context, instigating disunity would have been tantamount to committing treason—hardly a promising political basis for a potential challenger to Le Duan's preeminent position as Party First Secretary.

Le Duan, for his part, eliminated a conceivable area of political conflict by reaffirming his adherence to the principle of collective leadership:

. . . the Party's leadership is always based on a collective principle. Individual dictatorship is a fact that completely opposes the Party's nature. A man, however exceptional the qualities he may have, can never know all things and all facts in all aspects and in all their variations. Therefore it is necessary to have collective intelligence. Only with a collective decision based on collective intelligence will we be able to avoid subjectivism that leads to errors and sometimes to dangerous consequences.[40]

Third, the relatively small size of the political system itself severely limited the possibilities for an individual or faction to create an autonomous regional or institutional base of power. The administrative apparatus in the DRV was quite modest. Hence, the top leaders had taken on a large number of diverse functions, and there was a tightly woven, highly personalized net of interrelationships between

[36] The US National Security Council's overview of the situation in Vietnam in 1969, as seen by the various governmental agencies concerned, stated: "Our knowledge of the existence and significance of any kinds of factions within the Hanoi leadership is imprecise. . . . Different Politburo members probably ally themselves temporarily with other members on specific issues, and policy decisions are obviously subject to review. The leadership has changed its war and negotiation tactics several times in the last few years, suggesting that members of the Politburo adjust their view to circumstances. Some members may remain on one or another side of any question, but others apparently shift their ground as they deem necessary." See *Congressional Record* (Washington, DC), May 10, 1972, pp. 16761-62.

[37] Ho was chairman (*Chu tich*) of both the Party and the Republic. (The conventional "President" Ho came into currency because the French did not have a term corresponding to Chairman.) The post of Party Chairman has remained vacant since his death.

[38] See the editorial in *Nhan Dan*, Sept. 6, 1969, and Le Duan's oration at Ho's funeral in *ibid.*, Sept. 10, 1969.

[39] Speech to the National Assembly, Sept. 24, 1969, in FBIS, *op. cit.*, Sept. 25, 1969.

[40] "Under the Glorious Party Banner . . . ," *loc. cit.*

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Members of the Vietnam Workers' Party Politburo and Their Responsibilities
(as of June 1975)

	In the Party			In the Government		
	Secretariat of the VWP	Department(s) of VWP Central Committee	Central Party Military Committee	Standing Committee of Nat'l Assembly	Council of Ministers	National Defense Council
Le Duan	First Secretary	Front				Member
Truong Chinh		Party History, Legislation		Chairman		Member
Pham Van Dong					Premier	Vice-Chairman
Pham Hung	Secretary					
Vo Nguyen Giap			Secretary		Vice-Premier, Minister of National Defense	Member
Le Duc Tho	Secretary	Organization				
Nguyen Duy Trinh					Vice-Premier, Minister of Foreign Affairs	
Le Thanh Nghi		Emulation			Vice-Premier, Chairman of State Planning Commission	
Hoang Van Hoan				Vice-Chairman, Sec.-General		
Tran Quoc Hoan [a]					Minister of Public Security	Member
Van Tien Dung [a]			Dep. Secretary			Member

[a] Alternate member of the Politburo.
SOURCE: Adapted from the chart, "Democratic Republic of Vietnam - Party and Government Structure," Washington, DC, US Library of Congress, DOCEX, May 1974.

party and state institutions. Moreover, unlike China's Politburo—which because of its size had a smaller Standing Committee within it that constituted the fundamental decision-making authority—the Vietnamese Politburo of 11 members was compact enough to function effectively as a day-to-day decision-making group. This group also had a wealth of shared revolutionary experience, as well as a common external enemy, that probably provided strong bonds of solidarity.[41] Ho once calculated that the 31 members of the pre-1960 Central Committee (which included all the current Politburo members) had been imprisoned for a cumulative total of 222 years, an experience which impressed on them the importance of group solidarity and organizational discipline.[42]

Fourth, while in some socialist countries vexatious problems of ideology have on occasion afforded ambitious individuals with opportunities for aggrandizement on the basis of claims to ideological orthodoxy, Le Duan effectively foreclosed the use of purely ideological arguments in this fashion by relegating theory to a secondary position. Shortly after Ho's death, he stated that "there has never been, nor will there ever be, a single formula for carrying out the revolution that is appropriate to all circumstances and at all times," and he recalled that "Lenin pointed out that replacing the concrete with the abstract is one of the biggest and most disastrous errors in the revolutionary period.[43]

By taking this stance, Le Duan renounced any intention of becoming the unchallenged arbiter of ideological rectitude and, therefore, of employing ideology to buttress an impregnable leadership position. At the same time, however, he reinforced his influence in policy implementation by setting forth this sort of pragmatic guideline as the basis for policy decisions. As head of the Party Secretariat, he was in a position to decisively shape the final character of policies since he supervised the carry-

[41] It is worth recalling here that the diversity of prior revolutionary experience of the leaders of post-1949 China apparently left a legacy of discord among them.

[42] *Nhan Dan*, Jan. 7, 1960.

[43] "Under the Glorious Party Banner . . . ," *loc. cit.*

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ing out of policy decisions. There is evidence that he took advantage of his position to do so [44]—as already noted, for example, in the case of the crucial policy decision in 1969 concerning the management of agricultural cooperatives.[45]

Some other considerations cast further doubt on the existence of coherent factions within the DRV leadership. To begin with, differences in nuance and emphasis in policy positions can reflect things other than factional power struggles. For instance, the various North Vietnamese leaders occupied different posts within the DRV political system, and these jobs may have shaped the perspectives of their incumbents. Le Duan, as the head of the Vietnamese revolutionary movement, was clearly accountable for the current state of its well-being and for its future survival; thus, it could be anticipated that he would be concerned with the South as well as the North. As the head of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly, on the other hand, Truong Chinh was primarily responsible for the state and its institutions; consequently, it might be expected that he would stress adherence to regulations designed to strengthen socialist institutions in the DRV.

In addition, whenever Le Duan and Truong Chinh advanced conflicting views on a specific issue, the result was not a victory for one or the other party, but either a resolution of the conflict by compromise or by the compelling force of events, or a transfer of the conflict to the less hazardous arena of policy implementation. The 1971 decision to move ahead with a program of reconstruction contingent upon future events in the South offers a good illustration of the former; the treatment of Truong Chinh's proposals to tighten up the management of agricultural cooperatives affords an example of the latter.

The apparent absence of political struggle between organized opinion groups or personal factions among North Vietnamese leaders after Ho's death, it should be noted, raises a question about the extent to which the DRV political system falls within the standard socialist mold and the extent to which it is shaped by Vietnamese political culture. There is persuasive evidence that in other socialist systems political succession can cause instability because these systems lack both an established decision-making center whose authority is always recognized, and any institutional method for transferring power.[46] But in the case of Vietnam the continuous struggle against foreign domination has imposed a remarkable and durable unity among the Vietnamese Communist leaders;[47] thus, the DRV political system has so far been insulated from the political crises that often result from leadership changes.

A Reversal of Priorities

Debate over national priorities continued after the initial adjustment to Ho's death. To recapitulate briefly, the 19th Plenum of the Central Committee passed a resolution sanctioning major undertakings with respect to reconstruction and construction in the North but providing for a reconsideration of that decision if circumstances in the South altered significantly. The South Vietnamese invasion of lower Laos with US backing in February 1971, though of limited

[44] Professor Myron Rush has observed with regard to the Soviet Union that "the Presidium of the Central Committee provided a natural basis for oligarchy in the two previous successions [to Lenin and Stalin] while the Secretariat provided the basis for individual rule"; however, he goes on to note: "Even a stable Presidium, in which the members are accorded long tenure, need not mean that the oligarchy based on it is also stable. . . . A dominant leader (or faction) can use the Secretariat to deprive the Presidium, as a collective body, of its policymaking prerogative." See *Political Succession in the USSR*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1968, pp. 140-50. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the slogan, "Unite closely behind the Party Central Committee whose nucleus is the Politburo," advanced just after Ho's demise, was replaced by the slogan, "Unite closely around the Party's Central Committee," at the time of Le Duan's major address of Feb. 14, 1970. The latter slogan deemphasizes the role of the collective decision-making body, the Politburo, and stresses the role of the Central Committee, where Le Duan has a position of greater importance as head of the Secretariat.

[45] See the citations in fn. 32. Truong Chinh was plainly not oblivious to the problem of getting policies strictly implemented. In his 1968 critique of policy with respect to agricultural cooperatives, he complained: "The central organizations concerned have been slow to help the Party Central Committee assume ideological, policy and organizational leadership over the agricultural cooperativization movement. After the mistakes were uncovered, they did not suggest in time the appropriate measures to stop and correct them effectively." See "Weaknesses, Shortcomings and Mistakes . . . ," *loc. cit.*, p. 10. Not being a member of the Secretariat, however, he could not prod the party machinery directly into taking more vigorous action.

[46] Myron Rush, *How Communist States Change Their Rulers*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1974, p. 73.

[47] The most prominent figure who has been removed from office during the history of the DRV is Truong Chinh, but while he lost the post of Secretary-General of the Party in the 1950's as a result of his identification with excesses in the land reform program, he has since been restored to favor and at present holds the No. 2 spot in the DRV hierarchy. A more puzzling case is the unannounced removal from the Politburo in 1956 of one of the important figures of the early revolutionary movement, Hoang Quoc Viet. Despite his loss of high office, however, Viet continues to play a prominent role in public life as head of the Vietnamese Confederation of Labor Unions.

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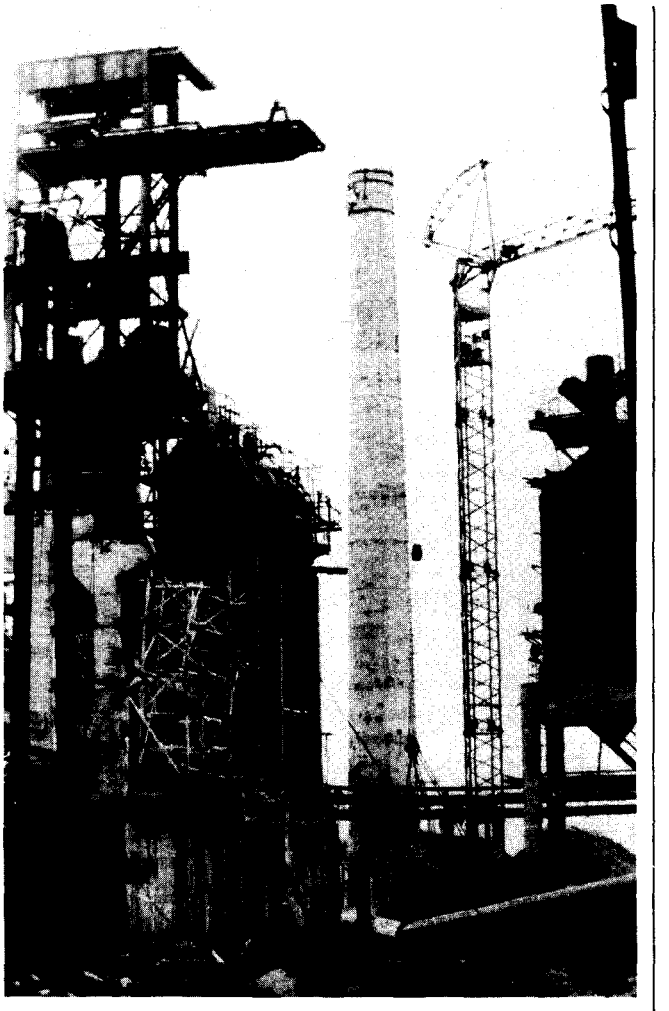
military importance, raised questions for Hanoi's leaders about the situation in the South. Prior to the Tet Offensive of 1968, the DRV leaders had foreseen the possibility that US operations in South Vietnam might expand to the rest of Indochina,[48] but in light of the opening of formal Vietnamese peace talks (with US participation) in Paris in January 1969, the phased withdrawal of US troops from South Vietnam in 1969-71, and the adverse Congressional reaction in the United States to the US-South Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in May 1970, they had apparently concluded that an irreversible de-escalation of US involvement in the area was taking place, and that this would allow them to focus more energies on the problems of the North. The incursion into Laos, however, clearly shook their convictions on the subject. In March, for example, the authoritative DRV commentator, "Combatant," reviewed the consequences of the failure of the invasion and posed the question: "What new Indochina strategy will Washington adopt in view of the presidential elections to be held in South Vietnam and in the United States?"[49]

Probably for this reason, then, the 19th Plenum's compromise was reassessed, and a decision was apparently taken to launch the 1972 spring offensive in South Vietnam. The implementation of the 19th Plenum's resolution was accordingly temporarily postponed.[50]

However, the signing of the Paris peace accords in January 1973 and the partial US disengagement from the Vietnam conflict encouraged the DRV leaders to revise their estimate of the situation once again and to attach top priority to the rebuilding and construction of the North. "Every time foreign aggression has been defeated," a *Nhan Dan* editorial of May 4, 1973, declared, "our people have advanced into a new period of development." Later that same year, on November 13, another *Nhan Dan* editorial stated:

At present, in the North, economic restoration and acceleration of production are the most important task. Building up the army and consolidating national defense also remain a task of primary importance, but the strength of national defense rests on political and economic strength. For this reason, the armed forces must also participate in construction and make a contribution to the production of goods for society.



A third blast furnace rises from the ruins of North Vietnam's Tha Nguyen ironworks in September 1974.

—Link for ADN/Zentralbild via Eastfoto.

In early February 1974, the DRV indicated that "almost all evacuated industrial enterprises have returned to their former locations," bringing to an end the policy of dispersion and decentralization followed during the peak period of the war. At the same time, in line with the decisions of the recently concluded 22nd Plenum of the Party Central Committee, Hanoi announced a two-year plan of reconstruction and rehabilitation.[51] In addressing the 22nd

[48] See Vo Nguyen Giap, "The Big Victory, The Great Task," *Nhan Dan*, Sept. 14-16, 1967.

[49] Quoted in *The New York Times*, March 23, 1971.

[50] The possibility of the resumption of US bombing in response to the spring offensive probably figured heavily in Hanoi's calculations about what to do in this regard.

[51] Report of the Fourth Session of the Fourth National Assembly, *Nhan Dan*, Feb. 5, 1974.

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Plenum, Le Duan affirmed that while the North would have to remain "vigilant" and "fulfill its duty" toward the South, the "key daily mission in the North is construction."[52] As part of the new economic reconstruction program and the subsequent preparations (still in progress) for the Second Five-Year Plan (1976-80), Hanoi reemphasized the single-manager system in industry and called for improved statistical work, regularization of work methods and procedures, larger-scale production units, and a number of recentralizing measures.[53]

In accordance with the new emphasis, the DRV stabilized its force levels in the South [54] and began to devote the bulk of the foreign aid that it was receving to its own economic needs.[55] No less important, the leadership tackled some key problems in the political realm that it had generally deferred coming to grips with during the 1965-73 period when it was devoting its energies primarily to coping with war-related tasks.

Political Development

These important problems were several in number. While a Special Political Conference had been held in 1964, there had been no regular party congress since the Third Party Congress in 1960. Moreover, the leadership elected at that time was aging, yet there had been no major additions to its ranks. Indeed, the top and middle leadership had remained relatively static over the years. The party membership as a whole was also in considerable need of rejuvenation. This need had already been acknowledged by the party as far back as the early 1960's. Official estimates published in 1962, when the latest comprehensive figures on the age composition of party members had appeared, had indicated that 70 percent of the members had been recruited during the Resistance and that only 10 percent of them were under 26,[56] and there had been official criticism then of the "narrow-minded views" of veteran cadres who had on occasion argued that "one year of Resistance equals ten years of peace" in terms of experience and value to the party.[57] In the intervening years, some renewal of party ranks had taken place—not only during the course of agricultural cooperativization (1959-65),[58] but also as a result of the participation of youth in combat and production tasks from 1965 on—but the problem still persisted at the time of the 1973 Paris agreements.

Between 1969 and 1973, the DRV leaders, although they had not been able to address these problems systematically, had fairly quickly effected personal readjustments to the new political context created by the disappearance of Ho Chi Minh from the North Vietnamese scene in 1969. These had ended with Le Duan's comprehensive policy review of February 1970.[59] With this speech, Le Duan had emerged as the principal spokesman of a collective leadership but not the supreme arbiter of policy that Ho had been.[60] Le Duan's preeminence was due as much to his leading role in the Secretariat as

[52] See *ibid.*, Feb. 18, 1974.

[53] See Resolution 22 in *ibid.*, Feb. 5, 1974.

[54] Hanoi's troop levels in the South remained relatively constant from the time of the cease-fire in 1973 until early 1975. Informed American sources estimated them at 150,000-200,000 when the cease-fire went into effect (see *The Washington Post*, Nov. 25, 1973). In late 1974, the combined DRV-PRG forces were said to number 190,000 men (see *The New York Times*, Sept. 11, 1974).

[55] According to figures released by the United States in 1974, the combined military aid of Peking and Moscow to the DRV in the first year after the cease-fire totaled $290 million, down from $605 million in 1972. (In comparison, US military aid to Indochina during the 1973 calendar year—most of which went to South Vietnam—was $2.3 billion, or $286 million above the 1972 figure). See *The Washington Post*, June 3, 1974. Subsequent figures issued by the Ford administration placed total Communist economic and military aid to North Vietnam at $1.2 billion in 1972 and $1 billion in 1973 (though the estimates of the US Defense Intelligence Agency were considerably lower). These figures also indicated that total Communist military aid to Hanoi in 1974 was $400 million (as compared with the $700 million that the United States provided Saigon). This represented a relatively small portion of the estimated total of $1.7 billion in aid that the USSR and China furnished the DRV that year. See *The New York Times*, March 20, 1975.

[56] See Vo Canh, "Let Us Strive to Fulfill the Party Development Task," *Hoc Tap* (Hanoi), No. 11, November 1962. According to official data, the party membership had totaled around 500,000 in 1960; by early 1968 the figure had risen to 800,000; and by 1970 it had reached 1.1 million. During this decade, the population as a whole climbed from 16 to 20 million.

[57] Vo Canh, *loc. cit.*

[58] In 1965, the number of new party members under the age of 30 had constituted 81 percent of the total new enrollment (as opposed to 71 percent in 1961), with women comprising 20.8 percent of the new recruits (as compared with 9.4 percent in 1961). See *Nhan Dan*, Feb. 4, 1966.

[59] Le Duan, "Under the Glorious Banner . . . ," *loc. cit.*

[60] To be sure, there is little indication that Ho used his unique position to impose his policy views on his colleagues, and most analysts feel that Ho was indeed an "arbiter" who reconciled conflicting views and crystallized decisions emerging from policy debate. Nonetheless, it seems clear that, in view of his unique position in the party, he constituted the "supreme" arbiter in the sense that he served as the ultimate source of authority in the DRV system.

In regard to this phase of the succession, it is perhaps worth recording that an official US study of 60 North Vietnamese defectors (only seven of whom were party members) just after Ho's death

(cont. on p. 47)

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to his influence in the collective deliberations of the Politburo. At the same time, his policy positions were reinforced by the fact that the continuation of the war in the South and the eventual resumption of the bombing in the North provided strong support for his preferred balance of priorities (because the immediate requirements of the war necessarily relegated socialist construction to a decidedly secondary concern) and by the fact that he functioned as the leader of a country at war.

In the institutional realm, some transformations had also been effected. The post of Chairman of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee, which symbolized Ho's unique position as the personification of the Vietnamese revolution and a figure who stood above the political system instead of functioning as an ordinary participant in it, had been left vacant (and probably will never again be filled). At the same time, the office of Chief of State, which Ho had also held, had been assigned to the aging Ton Duc Thang (81 years old in 1969). This divided the North Vietnamese political system functionally into an affective and symbolic sphere under the avuncular Ton (the only major DRV figure who is today accorded the title "Uncle" in everyday usage)[61] and an effective sphere under Le Duan and the Politburo.[62] Moreover, the separation of the top positions in the party and state can be viewed as an expression of a commitment to divided authority and responsibility on the part of the collective leadership. (Whether this arrangement will survive the next party congress remains to be seen.)

Le Duan, left, First Secretary of the Vietnam Workers' Party, and Pham Van Dong, Premier of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, pictured in 1969.

—CTK via EUPRA.

Another important institutional change had occurred in 1971 with the designation of Le Duan, Truong Chinh, and two economic planners (Nguyen Con, Minister of State Planning at that juncture, and Tran Huu Duc, Minister at the Premier's Office) to seats on the National Defense Council.[63] Possibly the intent of this move was to transfer the issue of military-civilian priorities from the political forum of the Politburo to the bureaucratic confines of the National Defense Council, where questions of coordination and implementation could be worked out more easily.

Finally, the DRV leaders had decided in 1971 to "especially reinforce the role of the district." [64] The district (*huyen*) echelon had long posed a problem in DRV administration because the heads of the provinces, which are equivalent in size to China's *hsien* (districts), could make their influence felt directly at the village level, thus bypassing the districts. Over the years, official attitudes toward the

reported that only two respondents indicated they "would have less faith in his successor." When all the defectors were asked what they thought the main effect of Ho's demise would be, only 17 said it would be "a loss in quality and prestige of leadership." *JUSPAO Research Report*, Oct. 9, 1969. This report also referred to another study of the attitudes of North Vietnamese prisoners-of-war in which "two-thirds of the prisoners" saw Ho's death "as having no effect on the collective course set."

[61] Other DRV leaders are occasionally called "Uncle" when social decorum demands it, such as when young people meet with them.

[62] It should be noted here, however, that in early 1973 Le Duan made a significant trip to the PRG zone in Quangtri Province during which he emerged from his cultivated anonymity and visited his native village for the first time in 50 years. That visit inevitably placed an "affective" stamp on what had hitherto been an entirely "effective" and anonymous political persona. The following vignette carried in the press illustrates the point quite well: "Far from his native area, going off to engage in revolutionary activities from the age of 17, nearly 50 years passed since there has been an opportunity to visit the relatives and neighbors who have lived in the 'place where his umbilical cord was cut and his placenta buried' [an expression symbolizing a Vietnamese's physical attachment to his birthplace]." See *Nhan Dan*, Feb. 10, 1973. In 1974, Le Duan, with Ton Duc Thang, also visited Ho's birthplace. See *ibid.*, Jan. 29, 1974.

[63] US Mission in Vietnam, *Documents and Research Notes*, No. 103, February 1972, p. 24.

[64] This decision of the 19th Plenum is discussed in *Les Institutions de la République Démocratique de Viet-nam* (The Institutions of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam), Hanoi, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1972, pp. 79-85.

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district had varied. In the late 1950's, prior to cooperativization, there had been discussion in the party press about eliminating it, but in 1966 a major campaign to strengthen the role of the District Party Committees had been launched to meet the difficulties of a countryside engulfed by war. However, little had actually been done to strengthen the governmental/administrative machinery at this level,[65] and by 1968 the official focus of concern had shifted to the province level, which was by then playing the key role in the management of the decentralized wartime economy. But with the cessation of US bombing of the North and with declining American involvement in the Vietnam war, the 19th Plenum of the Central Committee in 1971 had resolved to reinforce the administrative and management role of the district.

With respect to the membership of the party, a 1970 *Nhan Dan* editorial had announced a new program for the recruitment of a "Ho Chi Minh" class of young members into the party, a tightening of party discipline, and an intensification of training efforts.[66] (The reasons given for the inauguration of this program—that "in the past few years our party absorbed tens of thousands of new members who are weak in training and education" and that many "cadres and party members displayed manifestations of backsliding in the face of new steps of development of the revolution"—had led some foreign observers to conclude that a purge was in the offing,[67] but subsequent evidence had suggested that the DRV leadership had essentially been concerned with improving both technical and ideological training and in restoring control over local party organizations which had enjoyed considerable *de facto* autonomy during the US bombing of the North.[68]) The most important aspect of this program had been its attempt to integrate young and old cadres and to improve the level of expertise within the party in matters related to economic planning and development by bringing in younger and better-trained cadres. Le Duan had spoken of a need to "link together the cadres who have struggled for a long time and young cadres so that they can augment each other's strong points, and assist each other in overcoming weak points." [69]

Nevertheless, there could be no adequate resolution of such organizational and administrative problems while the DRV policymakers remained preoccupied with the war in the South. With the signing of the Paris peace accords in 1973, however, the leadership began to address itself to a more comprehensive solution to these problems. Important changes were made in the state bureaucracy. In 1974, the economic management bureaucracy was strengthened with the appointment of three new vice-premiers and the creation of supra-ministerial functional "blocs" (*khoi*)[70] which grouped together related administrative sectors;[71] this reorganization left established cadres in charge of the commanding heights of the bureaucracy but moved younger men into the vacated ministerial positions—presumably providing a form of bureaucratic succession.

The foundations for a new Five-Year Plan of economic development and, eventually, a new party congress were laid in 1974 with the carrying out of a national census (this procedure conformed to that followed before the announcement of the First Five-Year Plan at the Third Party Congress in 1960), although there has as yet been no indication exactly when the congress will be held.[72] The election of a new Hanoi Party Committee in April 1974 afforded a preview of the changes that are likely to take place at the leadership level. Of the 54

[65] See "Perfect the Leadership of the District Committees," *Hoc Tap*, No. 5, May 1966, pp. 59-62. This article indicated that even in 1966 "the position of the district echelon and the responsibilities of the district echelon have not been clearly defined and unified."

[66] *Nhan Dan*, April 25, 1970.

[67] See, for example, the article by Tad Szulc in *The New York Times*, March 9, 1970.

[68] While the Secretariat had been entrusted with carrying out a limited purge of "backsliding elements"—who, *Nhan Dan* stressed, were "not numerous"—it had also been ordered to tighten party discipline and to expand training programs. Furthermore, the leadership had decreed that the role of the Party Control Commission would be strengthened. See *Nhan Dan*, April 25, 1970.

[69] "Under the Glorious Banner . . . ," *loc. cit.*

[70] These functional "blocs" seem to be analogous to "staff offices" in the People's Republic of China, which are intermediate administrative bodies between the Premier and the various ministries.

[71] One can gain some notion of Hanoi's economic priorities from the shifts of personnel involved here. Le Thanh Nghi, a Politburo member, assumed direction of the State Planning Commission from a more junior official; the Transportation and Communications and the Finance Ministers were elevated to supra-ministerial positions in their respective areas (and promoted to vice-premiers); and a vice-premier was assigned to head the Ministry of Tools and Metallurgy. These shifts point to emphasis on reconstruction of the communications infrastructure, initiation of long-term economic planning, and creation of a highly centralized economy with considerable stress on heavy industry. See *Nhan Dan*, April 4, 1974.

[72] Since the 1960 Congress took place in the final year of a three-year "socialist transformation" plan, it is possible that the next congress will be held at the conclusion of the two-year reconstruction and rehabilitation program. The launching of a new five-year plan would almost certainly provide an occasion for a new party congress. The preparation of such a plan for 1976-80 is already under way (see *Nhan Dan*, Dec. 25, 1974), and it appears likely that the formal unveiling of this plan will be accompanied by a party congress.

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Members of North Vietnam's post-1945 generation pictured in Haiphong harbor.

—Thiet Cuong in *Vietnam* (Hanoi), No. 151, 1970, p. 21.

members elected, 32 were new members, and 12 were women.[73] At the recent 11th Congress of the Ninhbinh Province party organization, 19 out of 33 persons elected to the new Province Party Committee were chosen for the first time. Women delegates to the Congress constituted a quarter of the total, and half the delegates were under 40.[74]

To strengthen the party and state machinery at the lower levels, the DRV leaders took measures to implement the 1971 decision to "reinforce the role of the district." The district was to become "the echelon which has direct responsibility for production and living standards." [75] This expansion of the role of the district party and state institutions, it should be noted, could conceivably open up a path for rural youths to move from the local scene into the national political system, though emphasis on technical expertise as a prerequisite of leadership may afford superior advantages to urban youths.[76]

As for the composition of the party, the Politburo in March 1973 issued a major statement calling for the "combining of old and new cadres" as a "very necessary task that will help the party and state organizations become politically stable and effective with a high fighting strength capable of carrying out all tasks in the building of socialism on an ever expanding scale." It criticized the "narrow-minded and conservative attitudes that are hindering the discovery and utilization of new cadres."[77] One notable aspect of the drive to enlist new cadres was a de-emphasis of class origin as a ticket to leadership positions,[78] with greater stress being placed on technical and professional skills.[79] Organizational and leadership ability, in short, was considered more vital than a grasp of abstract ideological tenets.[80] (While such an approach to generational succession stands in striking contrast to that of the Chinese, which stresses class origins and ideological training, it may be that, where inculcation of desired political values in the young is concerned, one year of Resistance does equal ten years of peace in creating a basic consensus on national goals.)

In a speech to the Ho Chi Minh Youth Group in February 1974, Truong Chinh reaffirmed the Polit-

[73] *Ibid.*, April 16, 1974. At Hanoi's 1961 Party Congress, only 40 persons, not 54, had been elected to the City Party Committee (*ibid.*, Feb. 2, 1961). The party Central Committee may undergo a similar expansion at the new party congress.

[74] *Ibid.*, April 19, 1975. The subsequent Eighth Congress of the Thanhoa Province party organization elected a new Province Party Committee whose average age is 40, as compared with an average of over 50 for the previous Committee. See *ibid.*, June 6, 1975.

[75] *Ibid.*, June 4, 1975. In a major speech on agricultural problems in late August 1974, Le Duan laid heavy stress on organizational questions and prominently described the district as the "base for carrying out the three revolutions in the countryside" and as the "level which directly organizes and manages agriculture at the basic levels." *Ibid.*, Oct. 2, 1974.

[76] One should bear in mind, however, that in the case of returning servicemen who have spent some years in the jungle and in light of the integrating effect of the intermingling of rural and urban youths in North Vietnam's armed forces, the distinction between cadres of rural and urban origin may not be as pronounced as it is in some other countries.

[77] *Ibid.*, March 12, 1973. For an English translation of this and related documents, see United States Mission in Vietnam, *Vietnam Documents and Research Notes*, Document No. 112, May 1973.

[78] The Politburo resolution stated that "we must avoid too much emphasis on class origin" and added that "when placing cadres in leading posts of the party and state in various branches and echelons, it is necessary to pay attention to the criteria prescribed for these posts without forming a prejudice concerning their class origins." See *ibid.*

[79] See Turley, "The Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the 'Third Stage' of the Revolution," *loc. cit.*

[80] Whether "cadres are good or bad," said Le Duan, "depends primarily on the political line. However, cadres, as we have said, also exert an equally decisive impact on the political line itself. When a line has been formulated, the whole problem rests on the organization and implementation of the line. Organization is a *basic measure* [emphasis in the original] for insuring implementation of this line. Whether the organization is right or wrong determines the success or failure of the line." See United States Mission in Vietnam, *Vietnam Documents and Research Notes*, Document No. 112, May 1973.

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buro's concern with revitalizing the party. He urged the Group to rejuvenate its membership with a greater infusion of younger recruits and to increase the representation of women in its ranks.[81] The results of the 1974 census no doubt reinforced the leadership's commitment to the drive, for it showed that two-thirds of North Vietnam's population of 23,787,375 had been born since 1945.[82]

The Fall of Saigon

As indicated earlier, most signs during 1973-74 pointed to Hanoi's intention to devote its main energies to internal construction in the North. Even as late as January 1975, most observers held that the Vietnamese Communists envisaged a relatively low level of military activity at least in the immediate future.[83] But the unexpected and rapid disintegration of the South Vietnamese armed forces in the first months of 1975 confronted the DRV leaders with yet another critical decision with respect to priorities, and they opted to push ahead on the military front in the South.[84]

It seems doubtful, however, that Hanoi ever reversed its 1973 decision to accord top priority to construction of the North despite the large number of North Vietnamese troops reportedly in the South during the final collapse of the Saigon regime, for a number of factors considerably reduced the economic costs to the DRV of support for their forces in the South. Aside from the obvious point that the troops would have had to be fed and equipped whether they were in the North or South, these factors included the foreign military aid available to Hanoi, the earlier prepositioning of sufficient military supplies in the South to last up to two years at 1972 levels of fighting,[85] the capture of extensive US military supplies abandoned by Saigon forces, and local logistical support in the South.

In the event, the rapidity and decisiveness of the Communist victory obviated the necessity for a major policy reversal. During the final days of the conflict, there was a revival in North Vietnam of a slogan, "everything for the South," which implied a need for continued sacrifices from the population of the North for the benefit of the people in the South; but DRV assistance will now be directed toward the economic reconstruction of the South—a goal whose achievement, in light of the prostrate and devastated economy of South Vietnam, would appear to demand unremitting emphasis on economic development in the North. Furthermore, the termination of armed hostilities in the South will mean that North Vietnamese youth will increasingly be transferred from military duties to economic construction projects in support of efforts to build socialism in the North.

Prospects

The end of the prolonged struggle to determine the future of South Vietnam has thus removed this difficult and contentious issue from its former position at the top of the political agenda of the DRV leadership. While significant decisions about the speed and methods of reunification of North and

Women from nearby agricultural production cooperatives help reconstruct the Song Kha Dam in February 1974.

—Hagen for ADN/Zentralbild via Eastfoto.

[81] See *Nhan Dan*, Feb. 27, 1974.

[82] *Ibid.*, Aug. 30, 1974.

[83] In *The New York Times*, Jan. 15, 1975, for instance, James M. Markham reported that "barring unexpected cracking of the Saigon side, most foreign analysts believe the Communists have set themselves limited though ambitious goals for 1975."

[84] Whereas combined DRV-PRG forces in South Vietnam had been estimated at 190,000 men in late 1974, North Vietnam was said to have 275,000 combat troops in South Vietnam at the end of March 1975. *Ibid.*, March 31, 1975.

[85] *Ibid*, May 7, 1974.

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South must still be made, the guns-vs.-butter debate has been eclipsed by an all-encompassing drive to rebuild and expand the devastated economies of both North and South and to reassert party and state control in areas of North Vietnamese life that had been neglected politically and administratively during the war years. In light of these concerns, the political evolution of North and South Vietnam will probably proceed along separate tracks for the immediate and foreseeable future.[86]

In assessing the outlook for the North, it is important to bear in mind that the war years wrought major changes in North Vietnamese society. For example, the number of women in positions of authority has increased dramatically. While acknowledging continuing difficulties in expanding the number of women in leadership positions, Le Duan told the Third Women's Association Congress in February 1974 that there were 50 women on Province Administrative Committees (in 24 provinces), 3,000 women chairmen or vice-chairmen of District and Village Administrative Committees, 130 women managers or deputy managers of enterprises, 1,200 women instructors at the college level, and nearly 7,000 women directors or deputy directors of agricultural cooperatives, and that 42 percent of "industrial workers and state employees were women." [87] Women, to be sure, still do not hold positions of responsibility in proportion to their numbers and contributions to society. Indeed, more than 60 percent of the rural labor force (and nearly 70 percent in some regions) is comprised of women. Moreover, in certain areas there may have been erosion of the wartime gains made by women. In 1973, a detailed study of women in leading party and non-party positions in one Red River Delta district showed an actual decline in the representation of women in some lower-level positions—notably a halving of women production team leaders.[88] Women's gains in other sectors tended to suggest that this decline probably reflected the fact that in recent years fewer young men had left their villages than had been the case previously. For instance, there was a high ratio of women in party and other training schools.[89] The generational problem has compounded the difficulties of bringing women into village leadership positions. One district survey revealed that 70-80 percent of the party committee cadres at village level were over 40 years old, leaving a wide age disparity between the older male cadres and the younger new female cadres.[90] On balance, however, women appear to have registered significant gains in North Vietnam, and while many servicemen will be released to participate in economic construction in coming months, these gains are not likely to be reversed.

In addition, the drafting at the height of the war of members of groups previously deemed unsuitable for military service—notably ethnic minorities and Catholics—seems to have helped to integrate these groups more fully into national life. Demobilized servicemen from ethnic minority regions have been returning to their home areas and replacing some of the ethnic Vietnamese cadres there,[91] and this trend appears likely to continue. The contributions of Catholics to the war effort have also probably somewhat alleviated the distrust that non-Christian Vietnamese previously felt toward them. Moreover, the hardships that the Catholics shared with their non-Catholic countrymen seem to have bound them more closely to the majority community.[92]

[86] While it is clear that *de facto* reunification has already taken place, Huynh Tan Phat, head of South Vietnam's Provisional Revolutionary Government, on July 15, 1975, cabled the United Nations a request for admission into the international organization. As *Le Monde* commented (July 17, 1975), this indicates that no immediate reunification of the North and South administrations is planned.

[87] See *Hoc Tap*, March 1974, p. 17.

[88] See Dam Mai, "The Training and Development of Female Cadres in Donghung District," *ibid.*, May 1973, pp. 57-63.

[89] *Ibid.*

[90] Reported in *Nhan Dan*, May 14, 1974.

[91] A minorities district with a history of dissidence during the early years of the regime affords a good illustration of what has been happening in this regard. Returning minority servicemen from the district gradually took the place of ethnic Vietnamese in the border patrol and thus became a link between the local community and the central government. See *ibid.*, March 18, 1974. Education, of course, is even more important as an instrument of integration, and a *Nhan Dan* editorial of Dec. 15, 1973, suggests that impressive results have been achieved with respect to education in the highland (largely minorities) regions.

[92] Evidence of the attitudes of Catholics in the North and of their reaction to the bombing and the destruction of churches there comes from the accounts of foreign visitors to the North. A liberal Catholic periodical in Saigon published a collection of this testimony (with accompanying pictures) in 1972. See *Doi Dien*, No. 40, Oct. 17, 1972. During the same year, a group of nuns abducted from Quangtri during the DRV-PRG spring offensive was taken on a tour of the North (though not allowed unmonitored exchanges of views with Northern Catholics), and they returned to the South "impressed" and even "shaken" by the "high morale and didication of the Northerners, the iron discipline that governs the lives of the North Vietnamese, and the fact that the Roman Catholic Church, as far as they could tell, still functions in the North." See *Christian Science Monitor* (Boston), Aug. 9, 1972. (According to knowledgeable American journalists, the testimony of the nuns had a profound impact on South Vietnamese Catholics, though Church officials prohibited public discussion of their impressions.)

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Significant problems, however, continue to exist. The dislocations produced by the war and the heavy bombing gave rise to a deterioration in social conduct, especially among children and youth. Profiteering, corruption, and other social ills common to war-ravaged societies emerged in some places. There was an erosion of collective management of agriculture and an increase in private farming—a state of affairs that the regime apparently tolerated as a necessary temporary expedient to keep output up. Statistical reporting became unreliable in many sectors and at many levels.[93]

At the same time, these problems do not appear unmanageable. The North Vietnamese leaders have ended their wartime "great debate" and now seem more unified than ever. In early 1974, Le Duan, after frankly acknowledging the great cost of the war to the DRV but affirming that "we will never regret the price we had to pay," stressed that the moment had come either to quickly rebuild the material foundation for socialism in North Vietnam or to remain in an "immature and destabilized" situation and see the fruits of the DRV's past efforts destroyed, and he warned that the North must "either move forward or fall behind." [94] Earlier, after the signing of the Paris agreements in 1973, Truong Chinh had reversed his 1969 criticism of *Bao-Anh Viet-nam* for excessive emphasis on the war and told an audience of film makers that while the war was over, they must still devote great efforts to producing films on the "anti-American struggle." [95]

Moreover, the fact that since its inception the DRV has survived a prolonged and intensive assault on its institutions, has resolved a critical and potentially divisive debate on national priorities, and now appears to be frankly and realistically addressing its current problems attests to the resilience and dynamism of North Vietnam's political system.

It should be pointed out here that a major factor in guaranteeing the position of the Church in the North has been the importance of the Catholics in South Vietnam in the political struggle there. The role of Northern Catholics in reconciling Southern Catholics to a revolutionary regime that many of them had opposed is illustrated by a visit of Catholics from Hatinh Province (in the North) to Catholics in Quangtri Province (in the South) at the end of 1973, after the cease-fire signed in Paris earlier in the year. See *Nhan Dan*, Dec. 28, 1973.

[93] During 1973, after the signing of the Paris agreements, there were frequent complaints about inaccurate statistical work as the DRV tightened the managerial controls it had relaxed during the war years. In late 1973, numerous articles on theft of state property, false reporting, and profiteering appeared. See, for example, *ibid.*, Nov. 5, 1973. An article in *Nhan Dan* on Nov. 28, 1973, described an instance of the breakdown of school discipline at the height of the war but claimed that it had been restored when urban residential patterns had been restabilized. The following Aug. 7, the same journal summarized a campaign of several months to publicize examples of unacceptable social and economic behavior and offered guidelines on "making an honest living."

[94] *Ibid.*, Feb. 13, 1974.

[95] *Ibid.*, March 21, 1973.

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Communist Strategy in Laos

By Arthur J. Dommen

Since April 5, 1974, Laos has been governed by a coalition government of Communist and non-Communist elements calling itself the Provisional Government of National Union (PGNU). It represents the third effort at coalition government in this country since independence. The first, in 1957-58, lasted eight months. The second, formed on June 23, 1962, came apart in April 1963, when the ministers belonging to the Communist-dominated Lao Patriotic Front (*Neo Lao Hak Sat*, or NLHS) withdrew and left the capital of Vientiane. Now the third coalition, too, has ceased to exist in everything but name. Events in the spring of 1975 altered the underlying substance of the agreements on which it was based, even though they left the outward physiognomy of the coalition relatively unchanged, much as the events of April 1963 had done. It is the purpose of the present article to describe how the NLHS, through the events of this spring, managed to effect a distinct shift in the balance of political power in its own favor. The article will also briefly examine the backing provided the Laotian Communists by fraternal parties—most particularly those of North Vietnam and the Soviet Union—and the implications of these relationships for the future of the revolution in Laos.

Ever since 1954, the year the French Indochina War ended and Laos emerged as an independent state nominally at peace, the Communist Lao People's Party (*Phak Pasason Lao*—PPL) has basically employed a double-edged strategy in pursuit of its objectives. On the one hand, it has used its military arm, the Pathet Lao, to carve out base areas under its exclusive political and military control. While the size of these areas has varied, the Pathet Lao forces have consistently dominated sizable portions of the mountainous regions of Laos. On the other hand, acting through the NLHS, the Communists—without relinquishing their own areas of exclusive control—have from time to time entered into coalition governments with the rightist and neutralist forces controlling the remaining portions of Laos, and by operating there through a panoply of front organizations, they have attempted to bend the non-Communist elements in these governments in a direction favorable to the Communists. In other words, if one looks at Laos as being composed of separate red and white portions, the Communists have used the coalition strategy with a view to expanding the red areas to cover the whole country rather than to achieving a compromise whereby the whole country would become a shade of pink.

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Historical Background

Before examining how this coalition strategy has been applied in the most recent term, it is perhaps useful to review briefly the course of events which led to its earlier failure in 1963, bringing on a decade of resumed armed conflict. Viewed from the Communist perspective, the coalition formed in 1962 failed basically because the efforts of the NLHS to bend the policies of Prime Minister Prince Souvanna Phouma, head of the coalition government, in the direction desired by the Communists were ineffective. This in turn was the result of several factors. In the first place, Souvanna Phouma succeeded in retaining the loyalty of most of his political followers in the "neutralist" faction despite

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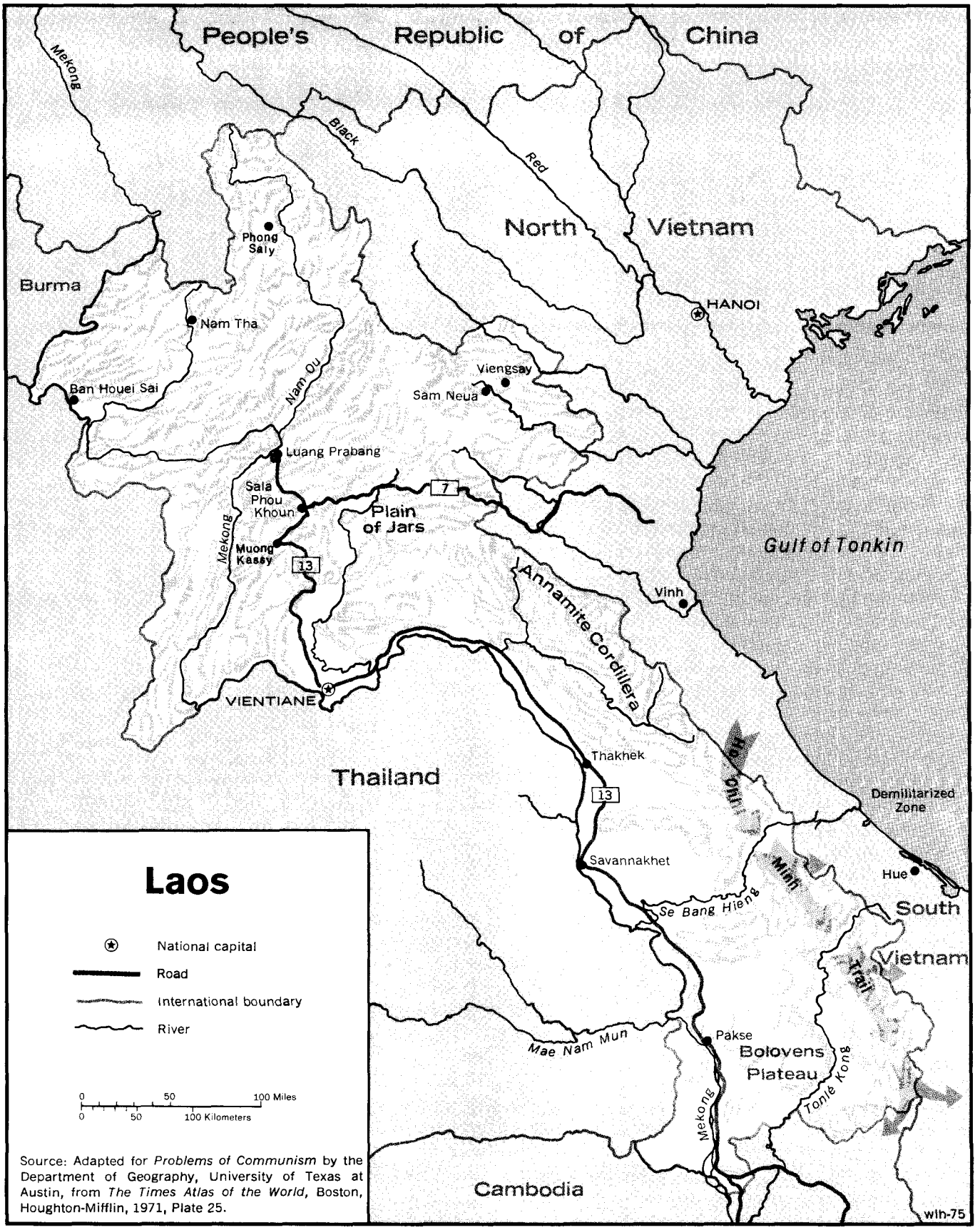

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some NLHS success in splitting off a small number of them. Second, he was able to count on staunch US backing for his consistent central demand for the removal from Laos of all North Vietnamese troops, which had been continuously present in significant numbers in the eastern border areas since January 1961. The withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops, of course, might well have undermined the security of some of the Communists' base areas, and when Souvanna Phouma failed to budge from his position, the NLHS felt compelled to withdraw its ministers from Vientiane. This signaled an abandonment of the coalition strategy that was to last nearly a decade. The NLHS removed to the town of Sam Neua in its base area, near the North Vietnamese border, whence it issued condemnatory statements against the "illegal" Vientiane government. (The latter, for its part, continued to hold open the Cabinet posts that had been allotted to the NLHS in the June 1962 settlement.)

In the period of renewed warfare after 1963, both sides had to operate under severe limitations on the means at their disposal. This was because each needed to camouflage its own violations of the 1962 Geneva Agreement on Laos in order to keep the conflict localized and avoid provoking a major confrontation between the big outside powers aligned on either side—*i.e.,* the United States and the USSR. However, given the diametrically opposed and seemingly irreconcilable views of the two sides as to the nature and origins of the Indochina conflict, such violations were conceded by most informed observers to be inevitable. Each side tended to view the very viability or marginal successes of the other to be a function of the support extended to its adversary by aggressive outsiders, and it therefore felt justified in calling on its own backers for assistance.

The outside supporters of each side tended to share the view of that side—*i.e.,* they saw themselves as engaged in Laos in thwarting the aggression of the allies of the other side. Consequently, both the US and the USSR continued arming their respective clients as they had done before the 1962 ceasefire. On the US side, arms and ammunition were furnished to the Vientiane government through the Agency for International Development (USAID) mission in Laos and the Central Intelligence Agency, and unofficial bombing was carried out in Laos by the US Air Force. On the other side, Soviet arms and ammunition were furnished to the Pathet Lao, and North Vietnamese Army units operated in Laos without any official acknowledgment by Hanoi. In proffering their aid, however, the US and USSR seemed to be operating under a tacit agreement to keep it within limits in order to avoid destabilizing the situation to a degree that might ignite a direct confrontation between them.

Two Pathet Lao officers scan the countryside for movements of rightist troops in a mountain region controlled by the Communists.

—A. Vasilev for TASS via Sovfoto.

Given the disinclination of their patrons to escalate the conflict in Laos beyond manageable limits, both sides were forced to operate within a rather narrow range of options, making the best use they could of the means at their disposal. The result was more or less of a stalemate which left the country partitioned into two zones of control divided by an irregular line running roughly from the northwest to the southeast. This line was not fixed, but shifted back and forth according to the seasonal advances made by each side, and pockets of resistance loyal to each side continued to exist deep within the territory of the other. Generally speaking, however, the partition left most of the mountain country with its diverse tribal groups in the hands of the NLHS, while the Mekong Valley with its towns stayed continuously under the control of the Vientiane government. Over the decade, the population map of Laos underwent considerable alteration as hundreds of thousands of refugees, many of them

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tribesmen, abandoned their villages (where they were subject to both NLHS conscription and American bombing) and sought refuge in or near the Mekong Valley.

The 1973 Accords

It was the gradual disintegration of the mantle of secrecy surrounding the tacit American-Soviet understanding concerning Laos that brought about a shift in the relative equilibrium in that country. Growing publicity led to increased domestic and international constraints on American actions in Laos, reducing the ability of the US to provide the assistance which theretofore had enabled the Vientiane government to hold its own in the struggle against the NLHS and the latter's Soviet-backed North Vietnamese allies. In these vastly changed circumstances, the NLHS apparently decided that the situation had become favorable for a renewed coalition strategy whereby it could pursue the twin political objectives of eliminating the power base of the rightist elements in the Vientiane government and bending Souvanna Phouma toward the left. The NLHS leaders consequently made a major concession in agreeing to enter negotiations with Souvanna Phouma in Vientiane with a view to concluding a cease-fire and establishing a new coalition government.

The talks, which began in late 1972, were protracted, but they finally resulted in the Vientiane Agreement on Restoring Peace and Achieving National Concord in Laos (signed on February 21, 1973) and an implementing Protocol (signed on September 14, 1973). These two documents paved the way for the formation of the PGNU, which included equal numbers of rightist and NLHS ministers and was headed by Souvanna Phouma in a nonparty capacity. The accords left no authority to the existing National Assembly, whose mandate was weakened by the fact that it had been elected by voting held only in the rightist-held areas of Laos. With the Assembly in limbo, the two parties to the coalition were on an equal footing politically, and both looked to fresh Assembly elections to renew their respective claims to legitimacy. From the point of view of the NLHS, however, such elections would involve unacceptable risks until it was assured of political control of the central government and therefore of the election machinery.

The remainder of this article will be devoted to an examination of the manner in which the NLHS achieved a seemingly decisive political victory in Laos by exploiting and contravening the two 1973 agreements. For the sake of simplicity, the two documents will be referred to in the following discussion as I (for the Vientiane Agreement) and II (for the Protocol), with specific articles and paragraphs indicated by Arabic numerals and capital letters, respectively.[1]

Prince Souvanna Phouma, center, at a press conference after the signing of the Protocol to the Vientiane Agreement on September 14, 1973. To his right, Peng Phongsavan, Minister of the Interior of the Royal Laotian Government and its negotiator in talks with the Communists, and to his left, Phoumi Vongvichit, negotiator for the NLHS and its Deputy Premier in the coalition Cabinet formed in April 1974.

—Yves Billy/Sygma.

Cease-Fire and Intervention

The first issue to be considered is the question of the nature of foreign military intervention in Laos after the signing of the Vientiane Agreement. This is dealt with here both because it is a relatively

[1] The text of I was broadcast by the Pathet Lao News Agency (based in Sam Neua) on February 22, 1973. See Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Asia and Pacific* (Washington, DC), Feb. 23, 1973. The text of II was broadcast by the same agency on September 14, 1973. See *ibid.*, Sept. 19, 1973. Both texts were broadcast in English.

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straightforward matter to describe the degree to which the allies of the two sides abided by the terms of the various agreements and because (as we shall see subsequently), Communist nonobservance of these provisions played an important role in the success of the NLHS. According to the agreements (I, Article 2-B and II, Article 15-A), foreign military action was prohibited from the time of the cease-fire—*i.e.*, Februry 22, 1973. For the Vientiane Government, this provision implied, most notably, the cessation of American air support. This, in fact, occurred. The only exception was a B-52 strike near Paksong, on the Bolovens Plateau in southern Laos, where a forward move by a North Vietnamese Army unit was detected in the hours immediately following the cease-fire.[2]

A related pair of provisions (I, 4 and II, 15-B) required the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Laos within 60 days of the formation of the PGNU. The Communist side simply ignored this requirement, as they had a similar provision of the 1962 Geneva Agreement.[3] Hanoi has never admitted to having its soldiers in Laos, nor has the subject ever been referred to by NLHS spokesmen. North Vietnam presumably kept its troops in Laos in 1974 because it could not afford to rely totally on communications links with its forces in South Vietnam through the Demilitarized Zone, despite statements by members of the North Vietnamese embassy in Vientiane implying that such links might suffice eventually.[4] For the NLHS, the presence in parts of Laos of 15,000 North Vietnamese "stiffener" troops supporting Pathet Lao units—in addition to 35,000 North Vietnamese troops manning the Ho Chi Minh Trail [5]—added to the security of its exclusively-held base areas.

The continued presence of North Vietnamese troops along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in itself constituted a violation of the Protocol provision (II, 16-C) stating that "the use of the territory of the Kingdom of Laos by foreign countries to intervene in the internal affairs of another country is strictly banned." (Similar language had been inserted in the 1962 Geneva Agreement at the express insistence of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem's ambassador to the conference.)

There was also no move on the Communist side to comply with the provisions requiring that "each of the two parties will have the obligation of seeking for those reported missing during the war, and of supplying the other party with information about them" (I, 5), and that each party would "at the earliest date possible" supply information on those missing in action "without distinction of nationality" (II, 18-D). This was particularly true insofar as this obligation applied to US servicemen.

For their part, the Pathet Lao generally abided by the cease-fire until circumstances changed again in March 1975. Pathet Lao military and police forces were allowed to enter Vientiane (the administrative capital of Laos) and Luang Prabang (the royal capital) as part of the "neutralization" of these two towns stipulated in the agreements, and they initially displayed a correctness of behavior that was much remarked upon by observers. As for other aspects of "neutralization," the details were long and complex (the general provisions were spelled out in II, 10), involving such minor matters as correcting the wording of signs in administrative offices. Not surprisingly, there were many matters over which the NLHS could express dissatisfaction and to which it could point as evidence of efforts by the rightists to "sabotage" the agreements.

Participation in the Coalition

More significant than the presence of armed Pathet Lao units in Vientiane and Luang Prabang, alongside royal government forces, was the arrival in Vientiane of NLHS representatives to serve in the PGNU. Aside from the fact that these persons had left their wives and families in Sam Neua, there appeared to be little to connect them with a small, tightly-disciplined party bent on imposing totalitarian rule. NLHS spokesmen continued to profess loyalty to the monarchy, and they did not question the Vientiane side's continued adherence to the Constitution (the PGNU was established by extra-Constitutional procedure contained in I, 7 and 8). Moreover, the conduct of the NLHS ministers in the coalition government was unobtrusive, contrasting sharply with the behavior of their predecessors in 1962-63: there was little evidence of the propaganda tirades and recurrent confrontations that had marked Cabinet meetings in that period. Inflamma-

[2] *The New York Times* (New York), Feb. 24, 1973.

[3] In 1962, a token handful of North Vietnamese troops were checked out of Laos at a prescribed exit point; the rest were quietly transformed into what the North Vietnamese embassy in Vientiane called "construction workers" or were simply never mentioned at all.

[4] *The New York Times*, Aug. 26, 1973.

[5] These figures were given by Sisouk na Champassak, PGNU Defense Minister, at a press conference in Vientiane on April 18, 1975. See FBIS, *op. cit.*, April 21, 1975.

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tory issues, such as the question of recognizing the Communist insurgent governments in South Vietnam and Cambodia or the question of the status of the National Assembly, were repeatedly put on ice. Phoumi Vongvichit, the Deputy Prime Minister representing the NLHS, demonstrated moderation during a tenure of several months as Acting Prime Minister after Souvanna Phouma had suffered a heart attack and gone to France for care and convalescence. As a consequence, the PGNU seemed able to function smoothly despite the requirement of unanimity in government decisions (II, 4).

From the early days of the coalition, however, NLHS representatives in Vientiane and Luang Prabang did engage in active propagandizing activities for their side. This was done mainly under the guise of "explaining" to the populace the meaning of an 18-point program adopted by the National Political Consultative Council (NPCC), which had been set up under the coalition accords as an advisory body to the PGNU and had its headquarters in Luang Prabang. (Prince Souphanouvong, Chairman of the NLHS Central Committee, had assumed the leadership of the NPCC instead of joining the PGNU, and the NLHS exercised a predominant influence in its deliberations.) The days following the entry of the Pathet Lao contingents into Vientiane and Luang Prabang also saw a proliferation there of "political and mass organizations"—some 21 in all.

A 1962 photo of Nouhak Phoumsavan, Deputy Secretary General of the Lao People's Party (Phak Pasason Lao—*PPL), typical of the Communist leaders who remained behind in the strategic base area of Sam Neua in April 1974 while others entered the coalition government in Vientiane.*

—Wide World.

No less significant than the conduct of the NLHS representatives in Vientiane and Luang Prabang was the ethnic background of those chosen for these roles. In a country where roughly half the population belongs to various ethnic minorities, the exclusively lowland Lao composition of the NLHS contingent in the PGNU surprised some observers, particularly since the NLHS had, from its formation in 1956, paid assiduous attention to the enlistment of followers among the minorities, a number of whom had become members of the NLHS Central Committee. In choosing its representatives in the PGNU, however, the NLHS was almost certainly governed by the consideration that these representatives would be concerned with the administration of—as well as with the extension of NLHS influence in—the lowland areas of the Mekong Valley thus far controlled by the rightist party and peopled largely by ethnic Lao.

The NLHS ministers in the PGNU were Phoumi Vongvichit (a member of the PPL Central Committee), Sot Phetrasy, Singkapo Sikotchounamaly, Maha Kou Souvannamethi, and Tiao Souk Vongsak—all well-known figures in Laos. Like Souphanouvong, Vongvichit had been a Cabinet minister in both previous coalition governments. Sot had had a long-standing working relationship with Souvanna Phouma dating from his years of service as NLHS representative in Vientiane from 1963 to 1973. Among those who did not come to Vientiane to represent the NLHS were Kaysone Phomvihan, the Secretary-General of the clandestine PPL; Nouhak Phoumsavan, the PPL's Deputy Secretary-General; and the remaining members of the PPL Central Committee (with the exception of Vongvichit and one other person mentioned later). These figures,

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less acceptable both ethnically and politically in the rightist-held areas, remained in Sam Neua Province, waiting to make their appearance at a later stage of the Lao revolution.[6]

The advantage of possessing a secure "base area" free from any but the most carefully controlled scrutiny of outside visitors became manifest as the NLHS reentered the game of Laotian politics after a decade in the jungle. From Sam Neua, Radio Pathet Lao poured forth daily commentary directed against the "rightist ultra-reactionaries" in Vientiane and Luang Prabang and other Mekong Valley towns which the NLHS was seeking to penetrate.[7] No similar outlet existed for the leaders of the rightist party because, while they remained in Vientiane and Luang Prabang, they were compelled to observe the "neutralized" status of these towns. (Radio Pathet Lao also maintained a hard line against the government of Thailand, which it could not have done if its commentaries had emanated from Vientiane.)

The Pathet Lao Offensive

This is how things stood in March 1975 when fighting broke out between the rightist and Pathet Lao forces. The fighting soon proved to be not an isolated clash, such as might have occurred by accident, but the beginning of a sustained Communist campaign. The actual fighting began along Route 7 in northern Laos, where the Meo forces of rightist Major General Vang Pao had managed to retain positions fairly close to the Plain of Jars. An NLHS delegate to the bipartite Central Joint Commission for the Implementation of the Agreement (CJCIA) stated that the fighting broke out on March 27. This would place it well after North Vietnam had begun moving its reserve divisions across the Demilitarized Zone in the wake of the debacle of the South Vietnamese Army in the defense of Banmethuot, and exactly two days after the South Vietnamese government abandoned Hue.

This sequence of events is probably more than coincidental. It is the author's guess that most of the key decisions affecting Communist initiatives in Laos have, in fact, been reached in Hanoi, and that the concordance of the PPL leaders was obtained only afterward. While we lack an archive analogous to the "Pentagon Papers" to prove this, there is considerable circumstantial evidence to suggest a close functional relationship between the Vietnam Workers' Party and the PPL—a relationship much closer than the term "coordination" would imply. One can cite the high priority accorded to preservation of the Sam Neua base area (on the North Vietnamese border), the large amount of time spent by NLHS leaders in Hanoi, and the repeated coincidence of major Communist initiatives in Laos with developments elsewhere in Indochina. As one of the components of former French Indochina—and one with a long history of Vietnamese intervention as well as a sizable Vietnamese community—Laos has long been regarded by North Vietnam as an area of special security concern, as evidenced by Hanoi's efforts to see that its influence with the PPL has remained greater than that of either the Soviet or Chinese Communist parties. We also have the first-hand testimony of a former high-ranking Polish member of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Laos confirming the close attention given by Hanoi to events in Laos within the context of North Vietnam's Indochina-wide policymaking.[8]

The Politburo of the Vietnam Workers' Party, with the help of Soviet advisers, has over the years clearly developed considerable sophistication in analyzing the operation of the political system in the United States and the bearing of events there on the timing of major strategic shifts in the Indochina war. For its part, the small PPL has probably not been capable of so sophisticated an exercise. Although the USSR established a large embassy in Vientiane in 1962, staffed heavily with experts on American affairs, the main contacts of the PPL continued to be with Hanoi. Consequently, it is not unreasonable to infer that the judgments that led North Vietnam to accelerate dramatically its efforts in South Vietnam in March 1975 were communicated by Hanoi

[6] That this time was approaching was hinted on July 3, 1975, when the PPL Central Committee announced that Phoumi Vongvichit, Souk Vongsak, and Sot Phetrasy were going abroad for extended periods, the first two for treatment of heart conditions, the third for a vacation. See dispatch of H. D. S. Greenway in *The Washington Post* (Washington, DC), July 7, 1975.

[7] From soon after the signing of the 1973 agreements, Radio Pathet Lao broadcast commentaries attacking the "pressure" brought to bear on the Vientiane side of the coalition by the "ultrareactionary clique" identified with the Sananikones and other powerful families. See, for example, the PL Radio broadcast of October 25, 1973 (FBIS, *op. cit.*, Oct. 26, 1973). After fighting resumed in March 1975, the attacks, of course, grew even sharper, focusing on rightist officials in provincial posts and, more important, in the Vientiane coalition Cabinet (see, for example, *ibid.*, May 22 and 23, 1975).

[8] See Marek Thee, *Notes of a Witness: Laos and the Second Indochinese War*, New York, Random House, 1973.

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to the PPL and served as the basis for the launching of a concurrent Pathet Lao offensive.

The fighting in Laos was, of course, in flagrant violation of the cease-fire provisions of the Vientiane Agreement (I, 2-C and 3-A) and of the prohibition against "intrusion or threat of intrusion against the areas under the control of the other party" (II, 14-A). In the circumstances in which the Laos cease-fire was put into effect, it was childishly simple for either side to engineer a provocation, and the PPL unquestionably appreciated this fact. It is fair to say that in none of the cease-fires ordered in Laos in the past 20 years has any agreed map of the extent of control of territory by each side been produced, and the 1973 Vientiane Agreement and Protocol were no exception. The Protocol provided for the setting up of "temporary cease-fire landmarks" in 27 "areas" where forces of the two sides were in contact (II, 12-A).[9] However, the precise locations where they were to be emplaced were left to be shown on a map *to be drawn up subsequently.* As a result, only 17 "landmarks" had actually been emplaced as of April 23, 1975, none of them on the front where the fighting actually broke out.[10] Pathet Lao troops had been active in this particular area, raising flags on territory claimed by them, and it was the removal of these flags by Vang Pao's troops that was one of the immediate causes of tension in March.

NLHS broadcasts denounced these actions as "land-usurping operations," and once the fighting began, they were quick to point an accusing finger at Vang Pao's troops. As in the case of previous cease-fire violations, no investigation was made by the International Commission for Supervision and Control, the body created at Geneva in 1962 for such tasks. The NLHS had consistently refused to permit Commission teams to enter territory under Pathet Lao control and had simply ignored provisions in the 1973 agreements reaffirming the Commission's 1962 mandate empowering it to initiate its own investigations (I, 12, and II, 25-D). In fact, for all practical purposes the Commission had ceased to exist.

Despite NLHS efforts to place the blame for the resumption of hostilities on Vang Pao, it is difficult to imagine what advantage he could have hoped to

[9] The dividing line between the two sides' areas of territorial control in the period 1962-75, running for some 1,000 miles, cannot properly be described as a "front." Prevention of a sudden breakthrough at any point, however, required large reserves of manpower (as the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese learned to their cost in the spring of 1969, when Vang Pao broke through onto the Plain of Jars). In this respect, the Pathet Lao were immensely helped by the presence of highly mobile North Vietnamese troops.

[10] See a Pathet Lao News Agency report of April 29, 1975, in FBIS, *op. cit.*, April 30, 1975. (It should be explained that a number of activities under the 1973 agreements continued despite the outbreak of fighting in late March.)

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Prince Souphanouvong, standing at left center, leads a Lao People's delegation to Hanoi in 1971, when Laos was still divided into Pathet Lao and rightist areas. He is welcomed by Ton Duc Thang, standing at right center, President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and other leaders of the DRV government and the Vietnam Workers' Party. Identifiable are Hoang Van Hoan, Vice-Chairman of the National Assembly's Standing Committee (left); Defense Minister Vo Nguyen Giap (2nd from left); Premier Pham Van Dong (4th from left); Chairman of the National Assembly's Standing Committee Truong Chinh (2nd from right); and VWP First Secretary Le Duan.

—Interfoto MTI/VNA via Eastfoto.

gain by launching his Meo troops, tired and decimated by years of war, against an enemy that could count, as it had done in the past, on the massive retaliation—if needed—of North Vietnamese Army units equipped with long-range Soviet 130-mm. artillery pieces. In the event, the fighting was Vang Pao's undoing. In the following days, Pathet Lao troops seized control of the strategic Sala Phou Khoun junction of Routes 7 and 13 and swept down the latter to Muong Kassy. Other fighting occurred in southern Laos. NLHS broadcasts quickly switched over from focusing on Vang Pao's violation of the cease-fire obligations imposed on both sides to emphasizing the effectiveness of the punishment being inflicted on the rightist forces. Said one NLHS spokesman in Vientiane; "The riposte will be tailored to fit the provocations." [11]

Realigning the Coalition

While Pathet Lao troops were scoring advances in the field, the NLHS sought to turn the military situation to its political advantage. Nowhere was this more visible than its moves to gain control of the Ministry of National Defense, long a priority NLHS target. The 1973 agreements had allotted the defense portfolio to the rightist Sisouk na Champassak. However, there was never the slightest hint of his having any authority over Pathet Lao forces; he was not even allowed in the zone which they controlled. By contrast, the NLHS-approved Vice-Minister of Defense, General Kham Ouane Boupha, loudly and publicly demanded information about the disposition of the Vientiane forces. (General Kham Ouane had earned NLHS approbation in 1963 when, as Governor of Phong Saly Province, he had sided with the Pathet Lao.) As the fighting continued, Radio Pathet Lao directed repeated broadsides at the rightist Minister of Defense. An example was this commentary of April 22, when Communist forces were on the offensive throughout Indochina:

If His Excellency Sisouk and the handful of ultra-rightist reactionaries continue to follow in the footsteps of the US imperialists and place themselves as the enemy of the Lao people's ideology, they will undoubtedly end up with the same fate as the Lon Nol reactionary clique in Phnom Penh and the Nguyen Van Thieu reactionary clique in South Vietnam.[12]

[11] Agence France-Presse dispatch from Vientiane, April 22, 1975, in *ibid.*, April 24, 1975.

[12] *Ibid.*, April 24, 1975.

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Such statements were in total disregard of the stipulation requiring the parties to the coalition arrangements "to settle the pending questions concerning them in the spirit of equality and mutual respect" (I, 13).

At the same time, under the protection of the "democratic freedoms" section of the agreements, street demonstrations were mounted in the major towns to demand the removal of Sisouk and other rightist ministers. Among observers in Vientiane, there was no doubt that the Communists were behind these demonstrations. Simultaneously, the NLHS launched propaganda activities—clandestine at first, because they were not allowed by the 1973 accords—within the rightist armed forces. Their effectiveness was evidenced by mutinies in several loyalist units, where *ad hoc* committees were formed to demand the ouster of officers known to be unacceptable to the NLHS. Such occurrences were reported in the First, Fourth, and Fifth Military Regions. On May 10, NLHS organs reported mutinies involving Combat Unit 2, which comprised the 506th, 508th, and 509th Infantry Battalions; two artillery units; and a tank unit in the Muong Xieng Ngeum region of Luang Prabang Province.[13]

On top of all these pressures, the failure of the US to save the legally-constituted governments of Cambodia and South Vietnam from final collapse heightened the mood of panic among the leaders of the rightist faction in the coalition government. During May, three rightist Cabinet ministers (including Sisouk) and two vice-ministers resigned and went into exile along with numerous military officers, including Vang Pao. At the height of the crisis most of the important figures in the PGNU were absent from Vientiane accompanying Laotian King Savang Vatthana on a six-day visit to a new NLHS "capital" at Viengsay, some 20 miles east of Sam Neua. (The confident and expansive mood of the NLHS was reflected in the great pomp with which they greeted the King, including the display of thousands of Laotian national flags—red and white with three-headed elephants—where customarily only Pathet Lao flags normally flew.)

The rightist resignations left virtual control of the government in the hands of the NLHS. Formally, at least, the PGNU Cabinet—actually, Souvanna Phouma, acting with NLHS assent—agreed to have the Prime Minister serve as acting minister in all vacant Cabinet posts pending the appointment of replacements. These appointments had to be negotiated with the NLHS and took better than a month to be resolved. In the interim, however, the NLHS took advantage of ambiguities in the 1973 agreements to make its weight felt in the crucial Ministry of Defense. It successfully pressured the PGNU (*i.e.*, Souvanna Phouma) into delegating "full authority" within the ministry to Vice-Minister Kham Ouane, a representative of the NLHS—a move that violated the spirit, if not the letter, of Article 4-C of the 1973 Protocol, requiring that a cabinet vacancy be filled at the proposal of the party whose minister has previously occupied the post. General Kham Ouane then proceeded to sign an order dismissing all the absent generals, thereby forestalling any comeback attempt on their part. His action clearly violated the principle of "joint responsibility" (II, 1-B), but if one stretched things, it could be construed as legal under another Protocol provision (II, 4-C) which stated that "each party shall be responsible for the affairs of the ministries *under its charge*" (emphasis added). Only after the return of the rightist military leaders had thus been precluded was the NLHS willing to relinquish control of the Ministry of Defense to Pheng Phongsavan, Souvanna Phouma's trusted lieutenant, who had negotiated the Vientiane Agreement with the NLHS.[14]

With the rightist camp in disarray, the NLHS also moved quickly to expand its control over the lower levels of the government hierarchy. Radio Pathet Lao set the line on May 16 with a call to "eliminate the reactionaries." In each ministry as well as in other official units such as the Vientiane mayor's office, all personnel unacceptable to the NLHS were forced out of office, usually by tactics of intimidation. NLHS sympathizers, after "investigating" the background of personnel in their offices, saw to it that petitions were circulated demanding their immediate removal. If resignations were not forthcoming, street demonstrations occurred. (The demonstrators also demanded the firing of all foreign consultants, exclusive use of the Lao language in official documents, and recognition of workers' committees as policymaking bodies.) Sometimes such demands were backed up by explicit threats of violence. This hounding of government employees from office again constituted a violation, in both spirit and substance, of the provisions of the 1973 agreements, one of

[13] *Ibid., passim.*

[14] This was by a royal decree of June 7, 1975, with Pheng Phongsavan actually taking over as Defense Minister on June 26. Vientiane broadcast of June 26, 1975, in *ibid.*, June 27, 1975.

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which (II, 1-C) stipulated that "the functionaries of the two sides will be jointly assigned to their appropriate posts in accordance with modalities agreed upon by the two sides."

Consolidating Territorial Control

The tactic of street demonstrations was also used successfully by the NLHS in effecting the next step in its strategy—the takeover of control in provincial capitals situated in what had been rightist-controlled territory. In Pakse, Savannakhet, and elsewhere, demonstrators, mostly students, occupied administrative offices on the pretext of demanding plausible reforms but, foremost, removal of rightist officials. One cannot specifically link the Communists to these demonstrations, but a member of the PPL Central Committee, Sanan Southichak, was reported to have made several trips from Vientiane to Savannakhet during the demonstrations there.[15] (Sanan had arrived in Vientiane to replace Sot Phetrasy as resident representative of the NLHS when the latter entered the PGNU.) To restore order, the PGNU then dispatched a delegation (on which the NLHS was represented) to negotiate with the demonstrators, and in particular to accede to removal of rightist administrators. Frequently the negotiations also involved demands by the demonstrators for the closing down of foreign establishments, such as USAID. Personnel of such establishments were subjected to much harassment in the process.

In these negotiations, the NLHS granted the demonstrators another so-called "concession"—that traffic be reopened between the two zones. In fact, "freedom of movement" had been explicitly guaranteed by the Vientiane Agreement (I, 1-D), which had also called for stepping up "normal relations between the two zones" and creating "favorable conditions for the population to move about, earn their living, exchange visits, and make economic, cultural and other exchanges with a view to consolidating national concord and unifying the country at an early date" (I, 10-B). However, the NLHS, for reasons of security, had never really accepted the principle of free movement between zones, as was made clear by Prince Souphanouvong in 1974 in a conversation with Pheng Norindr, then Lao Ambassador to the United Nations.[16]

By the spring of 1975, the only interzonal traffic that the NLHS had actually consented to involved the land route between Nam Tha and Ban Houei Sai and river traffic between Ban Houei Sai and Luang Prabang. Before the fighting, the CJCIA had briefly proposed opening Route 13 along the Mekong near Thakhek, but the NLHS withdrew its previous agreement to take up the matter, apparently because, as was generally known, the area involved was occupied by North Vietnamese troops. It should be added that the NLHS had also been slow in fulfilling its 1973 commitment (II, 19) to help refugees return to their former places of residence, even while it berated the Vientiane "reactionaries" for allegedly placing obstacles in the way of the refugees' return.[17]

Having now "conceded" the demonstrators' Communist-inspired demands for the opening of traffic between the two zones, the NLHS proceeded to utilize it for one particular form of traffic—the movement of Pathet Lao tanks and heavy artillery, all traveling westward. On May 22, the Pathet Lao News Agency attempted to justify this movement of military forces—which was in clear violation of the 1973 agreement calling for the preservation by the two sides of separate zones of control until the hold-

Children ride on a Pathet Lao tank, part of a Communist force which entered the provincial capital of Savannakhet after pro-leftist demonstrations there in May 1975.

—Wide World.

[15] *The New York Times*, June 10, 1975.

[16] From a personal interview in Washington, DC.

[17] The return of refugees to Communist-held areas did not actually commence until January 29, 1975. On March 24, two Soviet aircraft landed at Vientiane to assist in the movement of refugees back to the Plain of Jars. See FBIS, *op. cit.*, Feb. 4 and March 21, 1975.

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ing of elections to reunify the country (I, 1-C and 10-A)—in this fashion:

A number of units of the patriotic forces on May 19-20 took part in the defense of the provincial capitals of Pakse, Savannakhet and Thakhek, and several district capitals along the Mekong River in southern Laos. This action was taken in response to the requirement of the steering committee of the struggle waged by civilian and armed forces in these Vientiane-controlled localities and in accordance with the complete agreement reached by the Lao Provisional Government of National Union.[18]

Once Pathet Lao units had thus taken control in the rightist zone, it was but a short step to unification of the armed forces of the two sides on NLHS terms. While such unification had always been mentioned as an eventual goal in a final settlement between the rival factions, its actual implementation had been fraught with difficulties. In 1962-63, the two sides had barely broached the topic when the coalition fell apart. As a result, unification had not even been mentioned in the 1973 agreements; in fact, Articles 11 and 12 of the Protocol (dealing with the cease-fire) appeared to imply indefinite continuance of separate commands.

However, the situation was now drastically altered. In a written interview in June 1975, Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma declared:

In order to accelerate integration, I have given my agreement to the entry of patriotic forces into the principal centers of Laos. The example set in Vientiane and Luang Prabang, where the two military forces have been living agreeably for the past two years, must be followed throughout the country. In my mind the means of integration of the two armed forces is a very important question. . . . It will be arranged within the coming year." [19]

The true complexion of the unification evisaged by the NLHS was soon made clear in an interview by Kham Seng Kheo Sengstith, the NLHS chief secretary in the Information Ministry.[20] He claimed that senior officers of the rightist armed forces had requested the Pathet Lao to provide military advisers to all units from company level up to the Defense Ministry (an ironic reminder of the wartime situation when these units had had US advisers). He added that this request would be granted and would constitute the initial step toward unification of forces. Asked whether Pathet Lao units would reciprocally receive rightist advisers, he appeared surprised and answered, "It isn't necessary." He continued: "We don't need them. We are patriots. They are not yet patriots, but they are beginning to realize that they were puppets of the reactionaries and imperialists and committed crimes against the people." While this process was getting under way, the mixed police forces that had been established in Vientiane and Luang Prabang, were dissolved and put under undisputed NLHS control.

Prince Souphanouvong summed up the situation in an interview on July 12. "The current changes in the situation in Laos," he said, "do not conflict with any stipulation in the 1973 Vientiane Agreement and its Protocol. On the contrary, such changes have only resulted in a correct, speedy and prompt implementation of these accords." And he added, "Certain clauses in the accords on the problems in achieving unification between the two armed forces, unification of the two administrative systems, and unification of the two zones have been accomplished more successfully than expected." [21]

Communist Success in Perspective

We have examined in some detail how the NLHS managed to turn the situation in Laos growing out of the 1973 cease-fire and the formation of the new coalition government in its own favor. Seen from the perspective of the NLHS, the changes that have been wrought represent nothing more than the product of changes in the "objective realities" brought about by the just struggle of the "patriotic forces" and, as such, are entirely consistent with the "true" aims of the 1973 Vientiane Agreement and Protocol. From the viewpoint of an impartial observer, however, such an ideologically-inspired interpretation of events is manifestly inadequate. On the basis of the foregoing analysis, it is clear that the success of the Communists' coalition strategy stemmed from a number of practical factors, which may be summarized as follows.

The first and most important of these factors

[18] FBIS, *op cit.*, May 22, 1975. The provincial capital of Champassak was similarly "liberated" on May 24 (*ibid.*, May 27, 1975).

[19] Interview with United Press International, published in *The Washington Star* (Washington, DC), June 7, 1975.

[20] Published in *The New York Times*, June 18, 1975.

[21] Radio Pathet Lao, July 21, 1975, in FBIS, *op cit.*, July 21, 1975.

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was the preservation inside Laos of secure base areas under exclusive Communist military and political control. This was consistently accorded first priority by the Communist side—a policy which derived from the orthodox precepts of guerrilla warfare and at the same time was closely linked to the Vietnamese Communists' preoccupation with the imperatives of geography in a broader Indochina context. In a strategic sense, Sam Neua had become over the years as much a part of North Vietnam's mountain region as it was a part of Laos, and Hanoi was therefore fully prepared to assist in preserving its security under Communist control. In the final analysis, it was the successful preservation of the security of the Communist-held base areas in Laos that permitted all other elements of the NLHS's overall strategy to fit into place.

A second factor was the ability of the NLHS to utilize its participation in the coalition government to expand the mass base of its political power. Even at the time the coalition government came into being, the circumstances were highly favorable for the subsequent, quite visible efforts of the NLHS to develop a mass base of support, one of the reasons being the gradual American withdrawal from Indochina, which had already begun in the spring of 1969 with the first removal of US troops from South Vietnam. The 1973 cease-fire in Laos, which was accompanied by the cessation of heavy American bombing of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, further facilitated these efforts by enabling the NLHS to extend its political activities into the rightist-controlled regions of the country.

After a decade of warfare, enemies meet as an officer of the Laotian Royal Government, left, and a Pathet Lao officer are brought together in Vientiane as a result of the neutralization provisions of the 1973 Laotian accords.

—Wide World.

The Communists' success in this particular area was also helped by the continuing ineffectiveness of the rightist politicians in coping with a carefully planned and skillfully executed challenge to their own power base from a party that had proved its vote-getting ability as early as 1958.[22] The politics of Vientiane in the intervening years had continued to be the old politics of the French Protectorate. Power was wielded in desultory fashion by families whose names—Sananikone, Abhay, Champassak, Voravong—were almost household words and to which affluence and influence flowed in much the same fashion as in a feudal society. Corruption, fed over the long years of war by the inpouring of massive amounts of American aid money, emerged as an explosive political issue. In these circumstances, adroit NLHS propaganda played upon the exploitation of the population and the real grievances of soldiers who often did not even receive their pay. Once politicized, the exploited and the soldiers were no longer willing to shoulder the burdens imposed upon them as they had done in the past without question.

The consequence was that by the spring of 1975 the rightist politicians, who had hitherto worked with Prince Souvanna Phouma in an arrangement that had aggrandized them, had lost their popular support as well as their influence with the Prince. Souvanna Phouma the realist, finding himself under increasing leftward pressure from the NLHS, was not of a mind to resist and swam with the tide. And in the end the rightists took the only course left open to them, which was to flee, leaving the field to the NLHS.

It should be noted here that the support from Thailand that the rightist politicians in Laos had earlier been able to fall back on had also begun to erode in the changing Indochina situation. With the United States withdrawing from the scene, the presence of North Vietnamese Army units on the east bank of the Mekong in central Laos served as a strong reminder to the Bangkok government of the danger of a large-scale insurgency in north-

[22] In 1958, the NLHS won 9 of 13 seats contested. See Arthur J. Dommen, *Conflict in Laos: The Politics of Neutralization*, New York, Praeger, 1964, p. 109.

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eastern Thailand with backing from such a sanctuary. By June 1975, North Vietnam was also reported sending its political agents into Mekong Valley towns.[23]

The Prospects

When one looks to the future in Laos, it would appear to hinge chiefly upon the nature of the relationship between the PPL and the state government it now controls through the NLHS, on the one hand, and the Vietnam Workers' Party and the Vietnamese state(s), on the other. As long as the war in Laos dragged on inconclusively, the PPL was forced into a position of almost total dependence upon Hanoi, as most observers noted at the time. This was a military necessity, and the PPL leaders were only too glad to "lend" use of the geographic areas of Laos along the Vietnam border to Hanoi as the price to be paid for the latter's assistance in achieving their own revolutionary goals in Laos through the seizure of power in Vientiane. This arrangement also suited Hanoi since it eliminated many of the potential complications of North Vietnam's use of Laotian territory for the pursuit of the war in South Vietnam. At the same time, it enabled North Vietnam to make sure that the PPL looked at the outside world through Hanoi's Indochina perspective while not precluding direct aid to the PPL from the Soviet and Chinese parties.[24]

Now, however, the situation has undergone a basic change. The Vietnamese Communists, on the one hand, have achieved their ambition of bringing South Vietnam under their control; the PPL, on the other, has managed to achieve *de facto* control over Laos. The goals were parallel, but the results may have contradictory implications for future ties between the PPL and the VWP. For the former, the end of the need for military support from North Vietnam and the broadened perspectives that the acquisition of state power opens in the sphere of foreign relations (perspectives which the PPL leaders, unlike the Communists in Cambodia, appear ready to accept) would seem to enhance the prospects of a turn toward nationalism which by the very logic of the situation must sooner or later redound to the disadvantage of Hanoi.

On the other hand, the increased power of North Vietnam could conceivably make it more difficult for the PPL to free itself from the embrace of Hanoi than non-Communist Laotian leaders such as Souvanna Phouma have always supposed. The more Hanoi becomes involved in supporting insurgency in Thailand (particularly in the Lao-speaking areas of northeast Thailand), the less willing it seems likely to be to allow the Laotian revolution to take its own independent course. Some analysts of Lao Communist affairs see the influence of Hanoi behind the deliberate harassment of the US officials remaining in Laos, which contrasted sharply with repeated statements from the Lao Communists (including the above-mentioned NLHS Central Committee statement) calling for maintenance of good relations with the United States and continued American aid to Laos. Hanoi may, however, have more difficulty in foreclosing the possibility of expanded ties between the PPL and China. As for the Soviet Union, its preoccupation with China and consequent interest in having a strong Communist Vietnam on China's southern flank implies that it will continue for the forseeeable future to go along with Hanoi's desires so far as Laos is concerned.

Looking at the future of Laos in this larger perspective, one cannot preclude the possibility that the PPL may turn Titoist, but this seems unlikely for a long time to come.

[23] *The New York Times*, June 16, 1975.

[24] The preponderant place accorded Hanoi by the PPL leadership was reflected by the wording of a statement following the first NLHS Central Committee meeting called to evaluate the changed situation. It expressed thanks to the Vietnamese comrades "for helping and coordinating" in the struggle in Laos even before it expressed gratitude to Moscow and Peking for their aid. See Radio Pathet Lao, June 27, 1975, in FBIS, *op. cit.*, June 30, 1975.

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Books

Catholic Social Thought in Communist Poland

By Adam Bromke

TADEUSZ MAZOWIECKI: *Rozdroza i wartosci* (Crossroads and Values). Warsaw, Biblioteka Wiezi, 1970.
JANUSZ ZABLOCKI: *Na polskim skrzyzowaniu drog* (At the Polish Intersection). Warsaw, Wydawnictwo ODISS, 1972.
ANDRZEJ MICEWSKI: *Postawy i poglady* (Attitudes and Viewpoints) Warsaw, Biblioteka ODISS, 1970.
ANDRZEJ WIELOWIEYSKI: *Przed trzecim przypieszeniem* (Before the Third Acceleration). Warsaw Biblioteka Wiezi, 1968.

ONE OF THE distinctive features of the current scene in Communist Poland is the existence of a genuine Catholic political group known as "Znak." The group originated in the immediate postwar period when two Catholic periodicals—the weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* and the monthly *Znak*—were founded in Cracow under the sponsorship of Adam Cardinal Sapieha. From among their editors and contributors there soon emerged a closely-knit intellectual community which came to be identified by the name of the monthly.

At the climax of the Stalinist period in Poland, the Znak group suffered an eclipse and during 1953–56 was suppressed altogether. However, after the political changes of 1956, which brought a measure of internal liberalization, the activities of the group were revived and in some respects even expanded. Some individuals who had previously belonged to the "progressivist" Catholic organization Pax switched over to Znak. So-called "Clubs of Catholic Intelligentsia" were established in several Polish cities and provided the group with a rudimentary organizational framework. In 1958, people linked with Znak in Warsaw launched another Catholic monthly, *Wiez*.

The Znak group, of course, has had no participation in the Communist government. However, since 1957, it has been represented in the Sejm (Poland's Parliament) by five deputies, who have served primarily as a channel for conveying the sentiments of Polish Catholics to the Communist authorities. Despite this limited political role, the integrity and intellectual achievements of Znak's members have won their group high esteem in the country. They enjoy the full confidence of the Church hierarchy as well as broad support among lay Catholics. They have also won the undisputed, although at times grudging, respect of Poland's Communist leaders—Gomulka and Gierek alike.

Znak's activities have understandably aroused a good deal of interest in the West. Its role has been analyzed in many books and articles by Western observers of the Polish scene.[1] Moreover, the writings of some of its prominent early figures—notably Stanislaw Stomma, Stefan Kisielewski, and Jerzy Turowicz—have appeared in English either as articles or as chapters in collective volumes.[2]

Now, there is a new generation of Znak leaders, who have come to the fore in the three decades since the group's founding. The authors of the four books reviewed here are prominent representa-

[1] See Hansjakob Stehle, *The Independent Satellite*, New York, Praeger, 1965, pp. 102-08; H. Gordon Skilling, *The Governments of Communist East Europe*, New York, Crowell, 1966, pp. 129-30; Adam Bromke, *Poland's Politics*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1967, Ch. 12; Tadeusz N. Cieplak, Ed., *Poland Since 1956*, New York, Twayne, 1972, pp. 38-44, 183-204, 376-82; Adam Bromke and John W. Strong, Eds., *Gierek's Poland*, New York, Praeger, 1973, pp. 151-57, 176-91. A doctoral dissertation on the Znak group by Mrs. S. Miller is in progress at the University of Toronto.

[2] For example, see the writings by Stomma and Kisielewski in Cieplak, *op. cit.*, and articles by Turowicz and others in Bromke and Strong, *op. cit.*

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tives of this already middle-aged group. They are virtual contemporaries: Andrzej Micewski and Janusz Zablocki were born in 1926, and Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Andrzej Wielowieyski in 1927. In their early youth they all participated in the wartime non-Communist underground, and in the immediate postwar years they were educated in the social sciences. As Micewski states in his book (p. 7), they belong to the generation of Poles which ". . . from the tragic experiences of war became convinced of the existence of a close link between political thought and life, and of the necessity of grounding political programs in the reality of world politics."

All four writers have been involved in political activity for close to thirty years. Mazowiecki, Micewski, and Zablocki belonged to Pax before they joined Znak. Mazowiecki has been Editor-in-Chief of *Wiez* since its founding in 1958, and in 1961-71 he served as a Sejm deputy. Zablocki is the director of the Catholic Center of Documentation and Social Studies (ODISS), which published two of the present volumes, and he has been a Sejm deputy since 1965. Micewski was director of the Catholic publishing house "Verum" in 1971-73 and is a recognized authority on recent Polish political history.[3] Wielowieyski is Secretary-General of the Warsaw Club of Catholic Intelligentsia.

The four books, like their authors, have certain similarities. As is usual in the case of publications by Catholic writers in Poland, they were all permitted to appear only in limited numbers—no more than 5,000 copies—and hence are addressed primarily to the Catholic intellectual elite. There is also, as we shall see, a certain unity of theme among them: the volumes by Mazowiecki and Zablocki, especially, overlap in several respects. At the same time, each book expresses the special interests and concerns of its author. Taken together, they are undoubtedly reflective of the major trends in the social and political thought of Catholic circles in contemporary Poland.

THE BOOKS by Mazowiecki and Zablocki include materials written as far back as the early 1950's and even the late 1940's, thus providing interesting insight into the intellectual evolution of the newer generation of Znak leaders. The main preoccupation of this group, of course, has been with the confrontation in Poland between Catholicism and communism. Both Mazowiecki and Zablocki are acutely aware that they are living at a critical juncture in Poland's history—an awareness attested to by the very titles of their books, which translate into English as *Crossroads and Values* and *At the Polish Intersection.* Zablocki elaborates on the idea expressed in his title in these words:

After the Second World War, Poland found itself at a unique intersection. It was here, in our country, that two worlds which had hitherto existed separately met for the first time in history. These were: victorious socialism inspired by Marxism-Leninism and the example of Communist construction in the USSR, and the Catholicism that derives its strength in Poland both from its broad popular base and from its thousand-year-long presence in the history of our nation. (p. 5)

[3] His biographies of Pilsudski and Dmowski, especially, have won him broad acclaim. See *W cieniu Marszalka Pilsudskiego* (In the Shadow of Marshal Pilsudski), Warsaw, Czytelnik, 1969, and *Roman Dmowski,* Warsaw, Verum, 1971.

Reviewers in This Issue

ADAM BROMKE—Professor and Chairman, Department of Political Science, McMaster University (Hamilton, Ontario); author of *Poland's Politics, Idealism vs. Realism,* 1967, and editor of numerous works, including *Gierek's Poland,* 1973.

JOSEPH ROTHSCHILD—Professor and Chairman, Department of Political Science, Columbia University (New York); author of various books on East European politics, including *The Communist Party of Bulgaria,* 1959, and *East Central Europe Between the Two World Wars,* 1974.

PETER GROTHE—Instructor in Political Science, School of Continuing Education, San Jose State University San Jose, California); former foreign relations adviser to Senator Hubert Humphrey; author of *To Win the Minds of Men,* 1958, and a forthcoming book on Scandinavian attitudes toward the United States.

ROBERT F. DERNBERGER—Professor and Associate Chairman, Department of Economics, at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor); author of numerous papers on the economy of the People's Republic of China, the most recent appearing in Dwight H. Perkins, Ed., *China's Modern Economy in Historical Perspective,* 1975, and in the report of the Joint Economic Committee of the US Congress, *China's Economy: A Reassessment,* July 1975.

ALAN ABOUCHAR—Professor of Economics, University of Toronto; author of *Soviet Planning and Spatial Efficiency,* 1971; editor of and contributor to the forthcoming *Price Consistency and Efficiency in Soviet-Type Economies.*

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The position of the Catholics, on the one hand wanting to remain faithful to their creed and on the other hand striving to take an active part in a national life dominated in every sphere by the Communists, has been difficult and at times even painful. "There are problems," observes Mazowiecki with philosophic detachment, "which are insoluble: one simply has to live through them" (p. 10). The response of the Polish Catholics to the new situation has been basically threefold. Some persisted in their conservative attitudes and prayed that the Communist system would disappear. Others offered the Communist authorities their limited cooperation out of necessity rather than choice —above all, out of acceptance of the harsh realities of Poland's geopolitical position. Still others, especially the younger ones, searched for some positive motivation — compatible with their faith—which would enable them to participate in the mainstream of national life side by side with the Communists. They adopted an open posture toward the new system and declared their readiness to enter into a dialogue with the Marxists. Both Zablocki and Mazowiecki belong to this last group.

Like many Catholics in Poland who saw their position under communism as similar in some respects to that of the French Catholics under the Third Republic, Zablocki and Mazowiecki turned for inspiration to the French Catholic thinkers. Substantial parts of the books of both are devoted to discussion of the philosophic and social thought of Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier. Mounier's distinction between spiritual order (*le christianisme*) and temporal order (*le chrétienté*) helped them to delineate two spheres of activities for Polish Catholics: the religious and the secular. Both Zablocki and Mazowiecki, however, were aware that the situations in France and Poland were by no means identical, and they warned against the danger of imitating the French example too closely. "The attitude of Polish Catholics toward foreign models must not be uncritical," writes Zablocki. "These [models] should be approached in a selective and creative fashion" (pp. 372-73).

From Mounier's personalism the Polish Catholics developed a coherent program of their own. It has been particularly closely identified with the group around *Wiez,* for whom Mazowiecki and Zablocki were prominent spokesmen. The two authors view communism primarily as an instrument of economic and social advancement. Since these Communist goals are desirable *per se,* Catholics may and, in fact, should participate in their attainment. Both writers recognize that Poland under communism has made significant strides in the socioeconomic sphere—that it managed, in fact, to overcome its centuries-old backwardness in only 20 years. "It must not be ignored," observes Mazowiecki, "that civilizational progress in Poland became possible only under socialism and within the socialist structure" (p. 110).

Zablocki's and Mazowiecki's approval of the general socioeconomic objectives of communism, however, in no way implies their acceptance of its philosophic foundations. In this regard, on the contrary, both writers strongly reaffirm their commitment to Catholic doctrine. Above all, they categorically repudiate the Marxist tenet that, with the disappearance of capitalism, religion will also come to an end. In their opinion, the search for transcendental values is a permanent manifestation of human nature and will continue under any circumstances. "Religious needs," argues Mazowiecki, "are not linked to one or another social system" (p. 59). The presence of the Catholic Church in Communist Poland, then, is not a dispensable residue of the past, but a natural phenomenon which will continue indefinitely into the future.

The two authors also refuse to accept all the political implications of communism, especially its restrictions on personal freedom. This is not only because of their concern with freedom of religious practices. They make it quite clear that their concerns are broader. Democracy in their eyes is closely related to the personalist ideals of respect for law and human rights. "To me," writes Mazowiecki, "religious freedom is a part of the general liberties of man" (p. 12). Moreover, the two writers also believe that democratization of the Communist system is indispensable to its continued socioeconomic progress. They see this as the only way that new human energies and initiatives can be released. For all these reasons, declares Zablocki, "the Polish Catholics are natural allies of democratic tendencies. They are interested in gradually implementing the program of democratization . . . in all spheres of national life" (p. 140).

Understandably, the Polish Catholics were greatly enheartened by the changes that took place in the Catholic Church in the 1960's. Large parts of the volumes by Mazowiecki and Zablocki are devoted to detailed discussions of the highlights of the Vatican Council and the contents of the various Papal encyclicals

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of that period. They particularly welcomed Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum progressio,* which, in the spirit of Mounier, recognized the Catholics' moral commitment to socioeconomic progress. Likewise, the Polish Catholics warmly endorsed the Vatican's "opening to the East," which they felt should contribute to the improvement of relations between the Church and the Communist government in Poland. These hopes were well articulated in Zablocki's 1971 speech in the Sejm, which is included at the end of his book (p. 450):

Socialism in Poland, allied to the USSR, has proved to be more than a transitional phenomenon—a mere episode in history. By the same token Catholicism, which has recently demonstrated its vitality and its capability to adapt to changing historical circumstances, is also not a transitional phenomenon. The inescapable conclusion is . . . that there does not exist, nor in fact can there exist, any alternative to coexistence between them.

WIELOWIEYSKI'S book nicely complements those of Mazowiecki and Zablocki. Focused exclusively on the problem of socioeconomic progress, which Polish Catholics recognize as extremely important, the book is basically a sociological study of development viewed in both its global and its Polish dimensions. Wielowieyski distinguishes three major advances in man's history: first, the inception of human civilization some ten thousand years ago; second, the industrial revolution; and third, the entry into the technological age. He believes that at present mankind is on the threshold of this new era; hence the title of his volume (in English translation), *Before the Third Acceleration.*

The author traces the relationship between technical changes and social organization throughout modern history. He offers detailed and, in many respects, original interpretations of the industrial revolutions in Britain and the Soviet Union. His analysis of the latter is remarkably objective considering its inclusion in a book published in a Communist country. Wielowieyski pays tribute to the success of the Soviet Communists in overcoming Russia's backwardness within a very short period, but at the same time he does not fail to point out that it involved great human costs.

Turning to Poland, Wielowieyski notes that in the 19th and even the first part of the 20th century, socioeconomic progress was very slow. Until 1914, the country was partitioned among foreign powers, which paid little attention to the development of their Polish provinces. In the interwar years, progress was made in unifying the country and strengthening the Poles' national consciousness, but socioeconomic changes were slow to come, with the result that on the eve of World War II Poland remained an underdeveloped country. In the postwar period, by contrast, the economy made rapid strides. In 1967, national income was five times as great, and industrial production twelve times as great, as in 1938. As a result, the gap separating Poland from the advanced modern countries has already narrowed sharply. Wielowieyski admits, however, that in the course of rapid industrialization based on a Soviet model which telescoped the various stages of social growth, serious mistakes were made and many human reserves wasted. He also acknowledges that the intense efforts demanded by rapid industrialization have made the Poles "extremely weary" (p. 21).

Notwithstanding the progress already made, the author sees a new challenge ahead for the Polish nation. As he points out, Poland has only crossed the threshold of industrialization at a time when the most advanced countries of the world are already entering into the new technological era. Wielowieyski discusses various aspects of the technological revolution in the West and their relevance for Poland. In doing so, he demonstrates a broad familiarity with the Western literature on the subject, reviewing at length the ideas of Kenneth Boulding, Marshall McLuhan, Daniel Bell, and several other Western writers.

Wielowieyski's main concern is that Poland continue to progress into the technological age. He argues that to assure this, all possible incentives must be employed to overcome the weariness of the people, and he sees the key to success in a democratic evolution of social relations. Hence, like Zablocki and Mazowiecki, he views democratization as indispensable to Poland's continued economic development. Wielowieyski writes:

Socialism will become a stimulating ideal for the people only if it is closely identified in their consciousness with democratization. People are willing to undertake great efforts and accept new sacrifices only when social goals are determined with their active participation. (p. 391)

THE FINAL book reviewed here, Micewski's *Attitudes and Viewpoints,* is a collection of essays

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covering a much broader range of topics—from basic issues of political philosophy to analysis of current international problems, always with an eye toward assessing Poland's position in the contemporary world. Two themes pervade his commentary: political realism and personalism.

In reviewing the world scene, Micewski reveals himself to be a political realist *par excellence*. What counts in international politics, he writes, "is close scrutiny and cold calculation" (p. 158). His analysis of Poland's position is marked by extreme sobriety. He believes that ever since World War II the supreme reality in Central Eastern Europe has been the dominant position of the Soviet Union:

The Europe of Versailles does not exist, nor will it ever be recreated. . . . The absence of any interest in our region on the part of the West—and this can hardly be overemphasized—is a permanent phenomenon. . . . What is of crucial significance to Poland is the course of developments in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. . . . It should be noted that the people who are opposed to our participation in the Eastern bloc can think only in negative terms, but they have nothing positive to say; indeed, it is clear that they have no real alternative to offer. . . . (p. 157-58)

According to Micewski, participation in the Communist bloc, although the result of *force majeure* rather than of choice, has proved advantageous to Poland in various ways. It has helped the Poles to maintain their Western boundary along the Oder and Neisse rivers, and it has also been of crucial significance in Poland's rapid postwar economic advancement. Like other Catholic writers, Micewski is strongly committed to socioeconomic progress, but he views it less in moralistic and more in nationalistic terms—*i.e.*, primarily as a determinant of national power. It is power, he declares, ". . . not wishful thinking and romantic visions, but the real indices of technical, economic, and military progress, that determine the position of a country in the international sphere" (p. 171).

Yet Micewski, while approving of Poland's participation in the Eastern bloc, points out that the country's political culture remains basically Western and very much part of a common European heritage:

The Latin culture, the attachment to Christianity, the libertarian traditions in our history, and finally the pluralism of opinions in contemporary Poland—all these affirm humanist values in our country. (p. 136)

In line with this tradition, the author affirms his own belief in personalism. His ideal is a society where ". . . the main emphasis is on human initiative, the role of the individual, and respect for his dignity as a man" (p. 114).

The attachment of the Poles to freedom, argues Micewski, ought to be respected by the Communists. Otherwise the government will repeatedly encounter obstacles in carrying out its goals, and the country's progress will be hindered. Micewski's strong advocacy of democratization leads him to demand not only ". . . the right to criticize and to hold different opinions, but also an unequivocal acceptance of the pluralistic character of the society" (p. 132).

THESE FOUR books do not, of course, constitute a single, coherent Catholic program. Zablocki and Micewski pay more attention to Polish nationalism than do Mazowiecki and Wielowieyski, while Zablocki and Wielowieyski seem more forthcoming in their acceptance of Communist socioeconomic goals than the other two writers. Moreover, these four authors tend to reflect the views of the Warsaw *Wiez* group rather than those of the Cracow group centered around *Tygodnik Powszechny*, which is somewhat more conservative and, incidentally, more influential in the Catholic community. There is no doubt, however, that the ideas and the aspirations presented by the four writers are shared by a great many Catholics in Poland today.

So far, the efforts of Poland's Catholics to achieve genuine coexistence with the Communists do not appear to have been very successful. Real coexistence, as Mazowiecki rightly observes, would require a true dialogue "conducted in a spirit of mutual sincerity, respect and trust" (pp. 94-95). There is no doubt about the Catholics' readiness to enter into such a dialogue, but unfortunately there is less evidence of a similar attitude on the Communist side. The Communist authorities often give the impression that their tolerance of the Znak group stems—to borrow Mazowiecki's distinction—not from acceptance of "pluralism as a natural and permanent element of socialist civilization," but rather from "temporary expediency" (p. 143).

Since Gierek's ascent to power in 1970 the position of the Znak group has not improved and may, in some respects, actually have deteriorated. Requests for permission to increase the circulation

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of *Tygodnik Powszechny* from 40,000 to 50,000 copies have been steadfastly refused. Censorship of Catholic papers and books has remained tight. The Catholics have been discriminated against in public service and at the universities, and Catholic intellectuals have been conspicuously absent from Polish delegations at various international gatherings. In 1972, the Communists crudely meddled in the selection of the Znak parliamentary candidates, preventing Mazowiecki from continuing as a deputy. In 1973, the Catholic publishing house "Verum," directed by Micewski, was closed down.

Yet, for the time being, even if the Communists' tolerance stems solely from expediency, there is no need for apprehension about Znak's continued existence. As long as the group enjoys the support of the Catholic Church, it is unlikely that the Communists will attempt to attack it frontally. The regime, however, is likely to persist in its tug-of-war against the Catholic intellectuals and continue efforts to restrict their activities. Under such circumstances, the Znak group might unilaterally decide against participation in the next Sejm. The Polish Catholics, of course, would prefer to avoid taking such a drastic step; instead, they continue to hope that the Communists will show some signs of readiness to enter into a true dialogue with them.

The future of Znak has important implications extending beyond the fate of Poland's Catholics. Located at the crossroads of different political and cultural systems, at the intersection of communism and Catholicism, the group serves as a sensitive barometer by which true Communist intentions can be gauged. As such, its fortunes are relevant not only to relations between the Communist countries and the Vatican, but also to East-West relations in general. The Polish Catholics are well aware of the significance of their role. As Mazowiecki puts it,

There can be no true opening of Christianity to the East, nor any true coexistence between communism and the Christian world, which excludes Poland; in this regard, we can either advance or hinder global solutions by confirming or disproving the prospects of coexistence. (p. 179)

Communism in Bulgaria

By Joseph Rothschild

NISSAN OREN: *Bulgarian Communism: The Road to Power: 1934-1944.* New York, Columbia University Press, 1971.
NISSAN OREN: *Revolution Administered: Agrarianism and Communism in Bulgaria.* Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.
BOGOSLAV DOBRIN: *Bulgarian Economic Development Since World War II.* New York, Praeger Publishers, 1973.

THE PUBLICATION of these three stimulating books provides a welcome incentive to speculate about the unique as well as the universal features of Bulgarian communism —and indeed of Bulgarian political and socioeconomic development in general over the past half-century. Rather than recapitulate the contents of the three studies, the following essay will utilize them as springboards for the consideration of some interesting propositions which they either express or catalyze. Lest this treatment cause the high opinion in which the reviewer holds these books to be lost from view (though it is implicit throughout), he wishes to state it at the outset: these are learned as well as provocative studies.

The Bulgarian experience punctures the conventional present-day academic myth that political violence and political radicalism (of both left and right varieties) are the outgrowth of socioeconomic inequality and/or ethnic tension. The society of independent Bulgaria has traditionally been highly egalitarian in terms both of property distribution and of status flexibility. It was unhampered by any historic nobility, and its easily accessible educational system was effective in facilitating occupa-

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tional and hence social mobility for able and ambitious peasant children. Ethnically, too, Bulgarian society was homogeneous, with only very small and relatively assimilated minorities. (The Macedonians were a political power-group, but not an ethnic minority.) Yet the country's politics—during the interwar as well as the post-war Stalinist years—were particularly violent, and its extremist movements exceptionally strong. Frustrated nationalism, provoked by Bulgaria's failure in both world wars to achieve her revisionist ambitions in Macedonia and Thrace (against Yugoslavia and Greece), accounts for much of this domestic violence. Indeed, violence quickly became a reflexive pattern as, in turn, the large and well-organized community of Macedo-Bulgarians and then the powerful Peasantist, Anarchist, and Communist movements, as well as the military profession and its paramilitary auxiliaries, and even the royal palace, sporadically resorted to assassinations, bombings, riots, insurrections, quasi-insurrections, and executions to punish rival movements and persons suspected of laxness in the pursuit of Bulgaria's supposed true national interest.

THE PLACE OF Russia both in the strategy and in the tactics of this pursuit of the national interest and in the very perception of where that interest lies has always been a critical issue for the modern Bulgarian political elite, and it is a problem analyzed with particular perspicacity by Oren. An irredentist-revisionist state from the moment of her modern rebirth in 1878, and one whose national resources perennially fell short of her territorial ambitions, Bulgaria always seemed to require at least one great-power champion—unless she would opt for the solution recommended by her radical Peasantist premier (1919-23), Aleksandŭr Stamboliski. That solution was to escape from the need for great-power sponsorship by organizing a credible clustering of East-Central European peasant states which would be politically autonomous vis-à-vis all the great powers and socio-ideologically immune to both Soviet Bolshevism and Western industrial capitalism.

Though original, Stamboliski's strategy proved both unrealistic and abortive as his peasantism and neutralism were repudiated by the ruling elites of the other intended member-states of his proposed agrarian bloc. In the end, he was overthrown and assassinated in his own country by an outraged Macedo-military-bourgeois coalition for allegedly betraying the national interest. His fall was also greeted initially with satisfaction by the Bulgarian Communists, who resented and feared his Peasantist movement's militant radicalism and authentic popularity coupled, in a fashion which puzzled and disoriented the Communists, with an "objectively reactionary" ideological program. Despite the Stamboliski regime's international and domestic isolation, its overthrow entailed intense violence and continued repression in Bulgaria, and the successor regime soon extended this repression to the Communists.

Stamboliski's fate categorically reemphasized Bulgaria's need for great-power patronage. Who, then, would be the patron? Britain and France were never seriously in the running. For approximately a decade, Italy—then also entangled in her own revisionist-irredentist frictions with Yugoslavia—was the leading candidate for this role. But over the long haul Italy lacked the economic and military muscle to sustain her political ambitions in the Danubian-Balkan region; hence, from the mid-1930's, her prospects faded in the face of the competing candidacies of Germany and Russia.

Initially, Germany's manifest economic, technological, and military power and reputation gave her the advantage in this competition for the favor of Bulgaria's rulers. Nevertheless, the underground but always active Communists successfully kept alive the Soviet Russian alternative not only in the eyes of their own cadres but also in the eyes of the broader Slavophile sectors of the general population—this notwithstanding the fact that appealing to traditional historico-cultural Slavophilism and Russophilism, though a strong potential asset for the Communists, was for long deprecated within the interwar Communist Party as somehow ideologically unworthy of true Marxist-Leninists and only became really legitimate in the post-World War II era. In the meantime, Soviet Russia was portrayed during the interwar decades as a land of promise for the masses in general, but especially for Bulgarians because the Bulgarian comrades were the Bolshevik leaders' consistent favorites within the world Communist movement and because many Bulgarian Communist political exiles living in the USSR had achieved successful political and administrative careers in both the Comintern and Soviet party apparatuses. This particularly close relationship with the Kremlin for long gave the Bulgarian Communists an advantaged position vis-à-vis other

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European—especially East-Central European—Communist parties.

Of course, both the bourgeois-military coalition that favored Germany as Bulgaria's prospective big-power ally and the Communists who championed the Soviet Union wished to utilize such an alliance not only to enhance Bulgaria's international position but also to provide leverage for her social and economic modernization and industrialization. Thus, both Right and Left agreed in repudiating Stamboliski's hopes of avoiding the industrial-urban system.

QUITE APART from any historical or institutional advantages the Soviet Union might be said to have enjoyed over Nazi Germany as a model for the rapid industrialization of an agrarian society, the "intellectual" aspects of the debate were rendered moot, and the political issue settled, by the outcome of World War II, which placed Bulgaria squarely in the Soviet orbit and brought the Communists to power within the country. The Communists' achievement of domestic political hegemony bore little, if any, relationship to their wartime partisan record, which had been unimpressive. In fact, Bulgaria's war effort under her previous rulers as one of Hitler's allies had been rather minimal, and the underground Communist cadres had fought and suffered little in comparison to those in many other East-Central European countries. Nonetheless, both the postwar Communist purge of the preceding political elite and the immediately subsequent purge within the Communist Party of those members suspected of insufficiently intense and blind obedience to the Soviet line and Stalin's wishes were particularly savage. Bulgaria's somewhat mystifying tradition of seemingly gratuitous political violence was thus maintained into the initial years of the postwar era. Reciprocally, the audacious and "unrealistic" courage of the small group of anti-Communist opposition leaders—internationally abandoned and domestically isolated, and today all but forgotten—proved unique in the history of postwar East-Central European resistance to sovietization. Oren's politico-historical discussion of this episode is analytical, but his moral sympathies are manifestly engaged here.

But if the Bulgarian Communists owed their accession to power to Soviet military might rather than their own efforts (indeed, their own strength and morale were probably lower at the close of World War II than at the end of World War I), they nevertheless proceeded to consolidate their political position and to implement their (and Moscow's) economic program with characteristic Bulgarian efficiency and with thoroughness and toughness. Collectivization of agriculture was ruthlessly and successfully imposed on the countryside even though Bulgaria already had one of the most egalitarian patterns of land distribution in Europe, though there was no landed aristocracy or gentry against which peasant resentment and land-hunger could be directed, and though the old Stalinist tactic of pitting poor against middle-level and kulak peasants was consequently unfeasible. In the process, the Communist regime achieved total administrative-political control over the peasantry and hence the capacity to squeeze out of it both the surplus labor and much of the capital needed for the parallel industrialization program.

Despite the exploitation and suffering that this policy entailed, the peasantry did thereby obtain the opportunity to leave the land for industrial-urban employment. Indeed, the shift of labor out of agriculture in postwar Bulgaria appears to be of a magnitude hitherto unprecedented in European economic history: between 1948 and 1968, every second Bulgarian peasant changed his occupational sector as the proportion of the total labor force employed in agriculture plunged from 82 to 39 percent. This massive transfer was anything but smooth. Many were driven off the land by near-starvation conditions, and as Bulgarian industry was not able to absorb them all in spite of its rapid expansion, tens of thousands were involuntarily sent to work abroad, in Czechoslovakia and the USSR.

Still, Bulgaria's agricultural sector has received more technological assistance than any other in East-Central Europe, and today it ranks third in the area in level of mechanization and consumption of chemical fertilizer (on an index relative to acreage). As for the industrial sector, postwar Bulgaria has overtaken Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia in the proportion of the total labor force engaged in industry, and during the 1960's the country's rate of growth in industrial output was the highest in East-Central Europe and the second highest in the world (after Japan). All in all, Bulgaria today can boast a higher level of output per unit of capital than any other country in East-Central Europe and one of the area's best overall growth rates—an average annual increase in GNP of six percent. In analyzing the comparative statistics which demonstrate these trends, Dobrin is manifestly impressed by, and

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understandably proud of, the Bulgarian performance.

No wonder, then, that the Soviet leadership has concentrated more resources and attention on Bulgaria's economic development than on the development of any other East-Central European country. Contrary to the conventional assumption, this decision is not predicated exclusively on Bulgaria's strategic and political importance and her zinc and lead reserves, but also on the fact that her educated and energetic population makes her the Soviet ally where capital investment yields the highest return.

Often dubbed "the Prussians of the Balkans," the Bulgarians have long been regarded by outsiders, as well as by themselves, as the most diligent, frugal, sober, orderly, systematic, practical, and alert people of the Balkan region. They have prided themselves on sustaining a *robota* (work) culture, in contradistinction to the Serbs' *haiduk* (heroic) culture or the Romanians' and Greeks' alleged mercantile-ingenuity culture. Conversely, their very stoicism has supposedly also rendered them indifferent to coercion inflicted on them, or by themselves on others. While such generalizations about national character are risky, the Bulgarians are, on balance, impressively utilitarian and hard-headed, with little of the romanticism or mysticism of other Slav peoples.

Public Opinion in Eastern Europe

By Peter Grothe

JAROSLAW PIEKALKIEWICZ: *Public Opinion Polling in Czechoslovakia, 1968-69—Results and Analysis of Surveys Conducted During the Dubcek Era.* New York, Praeger 1972.
ALLEN BARTON, BOGDAN DENITCH, CHARLES KADUSHIN, Eds.: *Opinion-Making Elites in Yugoslavia.* New York, Praeger, 1973.

MOST STANDARD American textbooks on public opinion define it as a group or complex of beliefs *expressed* by a significant number of people on an important issue. This definition is adequate for the Western democracies, but it is not adequate for the so-called "closed societies." The word at issue here is "expressed." In the West, public opinion is expressed through the media, public forums, etc., but in Communist countries these outlets are controlled by the party. Nevertheless, any serious student of Communist affairs who has spent a reasonable amount of time in the Soviet Union and the bloc countries is aware that there *is* public opinion, even if it is not expressed publicly. It *is* expressed privately—to family members, trusted friends, and occasional itinerant Westerners. Therefore, while "unexpressed public opinion" may appear a contradiction in terms by traditional standards, there is clearly a need to broaden the traditional definition to include the "unexpressed public opinion" of closed societies.

At the same time, students of public opinion in the Communist countries can only look with envy on their colleagues who specialize in American public opinion, for while Americans are probably the most surveyed, "questionnaired," monitored, charted, and graphed people since Macchiavelli first introduced the concept of public opinion in its modern sense in his *Discourses,* quite the opposite holds true of the peoples of the Communist states. There is, alas, in Moscow no counterpart of the Michigan Survey Research Center. While Moscow *does* have an Institute of Sociological Research in the USSR Academy of Sciences, the discipline of sociology in the Soviet Union, which was coming out of its embryonic stages in the mid-1960's, has retrogressed since the late 1960's. Anyone who doubts the constraints on Soviet sociologists need only refer to a 1971 article by M. N. Rutkevich, Director of the Institute of Sociological Research. He stated:

Sociology is a party science. The Marxist sociologist, be he scien-

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tist, party official or economic official, cannot pose as an "impartial researcher." [1]

Although sociology is more advanced in some of the other Communist countries (especially Poland) than it is in the USSR, the fact remains that survey researchers are not free to ask central questions about the effects of the system and about support —or lack thereof—for the political leadership. Even if they did ask such questions, it is doubtful that many respondents, suspicious of the affiliations of the interviewers, would answer candidly. Thus, how does one gauge the real state of public opinion in Communist countries?

Fortunately for scholars interested in public opinion in Eastern Europe—as well as for the Czech people—there came "one brief, shining moment" of "Camelot" during the Dubcek era in Czechoslovakia. Although researchers in Czechoslovakia had conducted some limited sociological surveys prior to Alexander Dubcek's replacement of Antonin Novotny as head of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in January 1968, Dubcek's accession to power gave fresh impetus to such efforts. In the first months after the leadership change, the pollsters found that many respondents hesitated to answer questions freely, but after the publication of the Central Committee's liberal Action Program in April 1968, the situation changed. Respondents seemed to be willing and even eager to talk freely. In fact, the "don't know/no answer" response rate was generally less than it is in Gallup polls in America. The researchers continued their polling after the Soviet invasion in August and only stopped in March 1969, when they sensed that respondents were increasingly reluctant to express their opinions.

To his great credit, Jaroslaw Piekalkiewicz, Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Kansas, managed to obtain many of the polls taken between April 1968 and March 1969 and has now put them between covers. *Public Opinion Polling in Czechoslovakia, 1968-69* is a gold mine of priceless and absorbing data (it has 225 tables) and confirms most of the speculation of scholars about public opinion in Czechoslovakia before and after the Soviet invasion. Furthermore, it prompts the formulation of all kinds of intriguing questions and hypotheses about the state of public opinion in other East European countries.

It is impossible to do justice to the findings in the restricted space available here, but several things stand out. They are:

1) The people overwhelmingly supported the Dubcek leadership and the Action Program instituted by it. In August 1968, a sample of almost 3,000 Czechs was asked whether or not the changes in Czechoslovakia since the shift in January had been positive, and 95 percent answered in the affirmative. A poll taken in Slovakia a month after the invasion showed that only 0.5 percent of the respondents thought it would be desirable to "reconstruct the pre-January conditions." In a survey taken three weeks after the invasion, Dubcek received a "political trust" rating of 96.1 percent, and President Ludvik Svoboda garnered a 95.6 percent rating.

2) The Czechoslovaks were not eager to embrace the capitalist *economic* system. In one poll, only 5 percent of the respondents said that they preferred a return to capitalism. This datum raises intriguing questions about the pervasiveness of negative perceptions of the capitalist system in other East European countries.

3) At the same time, the polls showed overwhelmingly that the Czechoslovaks wanted the political pluralism and freedoms of the West. In one poll, 91 percent of the respondents opted for "free and democratic expression—reflecting several wants of different groups in the socialist society." In another poll, only 3 percent of those interviewed felt "democratic" elections under the pre-1968 Communist regime had really been democratic.

4) Three weeks after the Soviet invasion, a representative sample of respondents was queried as to what they thought was "the most important condition for the normalization of our life," and 73 percent of them answered, "departure of foreign troops." Virtually all the other responses were clearly anti-Soviet. What is especially notable here is not the thrust of the answers but the fact that such a poll was even undertaken at that particular time. Apparently, there was not a "Good Soldier Schweik" among the interviewers or respondents!

5) The polls revealed the existence of significant attitudinal differences between Czechs and Slovaks, party and nonparty members (not as great as one might think), and between younger and older respondents. Interestingly enough, the younger respondents—complete products of Communist society—were the strongest advocates of political pluralism.

Although Professor Piekalkie-

[1] *Voprosy Filosofii* (Moscow), No. 1, 1971, p. 139.

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wicz is to be highly commended for gathering this important material, his analysis accompanying the tables is, for the most part, fairly pedestrian and, at times, even sloppy. For example, he correctly acknowledges at the outset that some of the questions are impaired in value by biased wording yet, in discussing the data he does not distinguish between the well-constructed and the poorly-constructed questions. His failure to go into this matter more thoroughly constitutes a serious omission.

Moreover, in his final chapter, the author strays too far from the data and *"concludes"* certain things about other East European countries from his information about Czechoslovakia. *Hypothesize* he may; conclude he cannot.

WHILE Piekalkiewicz's book contains some valuable comparisons of attitudes of a cross-section of the population with those of party elites, it deals essentially with the public at large. By contrast, the great importance of *Opinion-Making Elites in Yugoslavia* lies in the fact that it focuses on opinion-molders. It may well be the first book in which survey research methods have been used to study political attitudes of, and influence patterns within, an elite group in a socialist country. Moreover, since it derives from work that is a part of an "International Study of Opinion-makers," we should eventually have some comparative data from other countries to put the results reported in it into broader perspective.

It should be noted, however, that the book is not so much about elite political attitudes *per se*—although it contains some interesting data on the subject—as it is about the political socialization of opinion-molders. The joint American-Yugoslav research team that conducted the study upon which it is based picked a sample of 499 legislators, federal administrators, mass-organization leaders, economic leaders, mass communicators, and intellectuals, and the team investigated not only the social background, mobility, and recruitment of these leaders but also the formal and informal structures by which they were influenced. The book could well be subtitled, "Who Influences the Influentials?"

One of the central findings of the study is that occupation had the greatest impact on political attitudes. Thus, the "intellectuals," whose business is criticism, strongly favored having more of it in the press and not penalizing even a political attack on a prominent figure. The federal administrators, in contrast, were not desirous of more public criticism.

Perhaps the most intriguing of the remaining findings relates to feelings about the Soviet Union. Of those in nominal leadership positions whom others in the sample judged not to have real political influence, 55 percent expressed highly favorable views of the USSR. In contrast, only 37 percent of those whom others in the sample perceived to have real political influence had the same positive attitude toward the Soviet Union. From these and other data, the authors conclude that—at least, at the time of the survey—the large number of political conservatives among the elite were not proportionately represented in the political "in-group."

The volume is not entirely immune from criticism. For example, the quality of the individual chapters is uneven—a not uncommon problem in any undertaking involving contributions from no less than ten persons. Also, the nationality issue is largely ignored. Does not the national-origins variable explain at least some differences in political attitudes in Yugoslavia? The reader looks in vain for data on this issue. In addition, some of the tables lack explanatory footnotes and are difficult to decipher. Nonetheless, the book clearly does, as the saying goes, "push back the frontiers of knowledge."

In sum, the two volumes discussed here are indispensable for scholars interested in public opinion in Eastern Europe. They are especially significant in light of the fact that the studies whose results they detail could not be carried out in Eastern Europe today, even in the countries concerned. The circumstances in Czechoslovakia that permitted the carrying out of the polls discussed in Piekalkiewicz's book have long since disappeared as a consequence of the demise of the Dubcek regime. In Yugoslavia, of course, life is still markedly freer than in the Soviet-bloc countries, but there, too, official controls have tightened considerably in the years since 1968. After a major political crisis brought on by national conflicts in 1971, President Tito in September 1972 wrote a letter to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia asking for "removal of all elements alien to our ideology and policy," [2] and a crackdown within the academic community ensued. The environment thus created is not conducive to efforts to follow up on the innovative research reported in *Opinion-Making Elites in Yugoslavia.*

[2] *Politika* (Belgrade), Oct. 19, 1972.

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Sino-American Trade Prospects

By Robert F. Dernberger

ARTHUR A. STAHNKE, Ed.: *China's Trade with the West: A Political Economic Analysis.* New York, Praeger, 1972.
HARRY A. CAHILL: *The China Trade and U.S. Tariffs.* New York, Praeger, 1973.
WILLIAM A. WHITSON, Ed.: *Doing Business with China: American Trade Opportunities in the 1970's.* New York, Praeger, 1974.

A CENTURY AGO, the lure of the 400 million consumers who then made up the population of China led many American businessmen to seek their fortunes by clothing the Chinese with machine-made fabrics and by lighting their homes with kerosene. While a few were successful, China's total foreign trade was never large, and the American share never exceeded more than one-fifth of the total in the pre-World War II period. After the Chinese Communists came to power on the mainland in 1949 and subsequently entered the Korean War, the US government prohibited direct trade between American businessmen and the Chinese. Thus, for two decades, no recorded trade occurred between the world's largest producer of goods and services on one side of the Pacific and the world's largest nation of consumers on the other.

The removal of the major legal prohibitions on trade between the United States and the People's Republic of China in the early 1970's has quickly reignited the interest of American businessmen in the Chinese market. Today, however, the lure of China trade has created an additional group of interested Americans—ranging from scholars to practitioners of the negotiating arts to out-and-out opportunists—who seek their fame, if not their fortune, by providing background analyses and information, forecasts of potential and future developments, and advice for those businessmen and policymakers interested in the trade picture.[1] Praeger Publishers is the foremost supplier of books for those interested in China trade today, and three of its most recent publications are the subject of this review article.[2]

China's Trade with the West, edited by Arthur A. Stahnke, is a collection of papers presented at a symposium on "The Political Context of China's Trade with the West" at the March 1971 annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies. It is at once the most academic and the most dated of the three books. The papers included in the work were written before the recent momentous changes in Sino-American relations took place—specifically, before US President Richard M. Nixon's visit to China in February 1972 and the significant relaxation of US prohibitions against trade with the PRC.[3] Thus, the

[1] Michael Lent, one of the contributors to the Whitson volume under review, writes: "When interest in US trade with China first soared, it seemed that there was more money to be made selling information about the China trade than by actually doing business with Peking. The high-priced trade seminar appeared, new newsletters were announced, and a corps of consultants—many lacking any credentials in the field—came into being. While it has become a cliché to bemoan questionable purveyors of China trade information, it should be noted that some of America's most sophisticated companies were their customers" ("Sources of Information on China's Trade and Economy," in Whitson, p. 473).

Joseph A. Precker, another of the authors, comments: "At the time there were many conflicting beliefs, and serious experts as well as traders put forth different predictions of what would happen, at what rate, and with what mechanisms. To further confuse the scene, many self-appointed China experts set themselves up as consultants and advisors to major corporations (at handsome fees)" ("China Trade: Fact and Fantasy,Truth and Consequences," in Whitson, p. 483).

[2] To its credit, Praeger Publishers was turning out this series of monographs on China trade well before the removal of the legal prohibitions on American trade with China. Nonetheless, a responsible reviewer cannot fail to observe that the rapid increase in demand for these books following the removal of such prohibitions may be responsible for their being poorly edited, their being produced by inferior methods of publishing (*i.e.*, irregular margins), and their being sold at relatively high prices.

[3] In addition to the four papers presented at the annual meeting of the AAS, *China's Trade with the West* offers a useful and informative introduction describing the various decision-making models used in the analysis of China's foreign trade and a conclusion summarizing papers presented at a separate 1971 conference on the "Legal Aspects of the Foreign Trade of the PRC," jointly sponsored by the Social Science Research Council and Southern Illinois University.

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very important question concerning Sino-American trade raised in these papers has now been answered by the ensuing events—*i.e.*, the question whether political considerations or economic rationality would dictate China's reaction to a renewed willingness to trade on the American side. The Chinese, of course, reacted fairly rapidly to the possibility of trade with the United States, and the US now finds itself China's second largest trading partner.

On the face of things, the completely unexpected and extremely rapid growth in Sino-American trade would appear to support the major conclusion emerging from *China's Trade with the West*—the dominance of economic rationality over politics in China's foreign trade behavior. However, the authors' choices of Canada, West Germany, and Hong Kong as case studies from the past in their analysis of the relationship between politics and economics in China's trade policies seriously biased the results in favor of economic considerations as the dominant factor. The alternative choices of the Soviet Union and Japan, China's two largest trading partners over the past two decades, undoubtedly would have led to a considerably different conclusion. In any event, the rapid growth in Sino-American trade in the early 1970's certainly has resulted as much, or even more, from political maneuvering by the Chinese as from any economic cost and benefit calculation (just as the opening of the possibility of trade by the US government was the result of political considerations within the Nixon administration).

In my own studies of China over the past two decades, I have consistently taken an approach that has sought out the elements of "economic rationality" in the economic policy decisions and actions of China's leaders. Nonetheless, I have no disagreement with Harold Hinton's summation of the shifting weight of economic and political factors in Peking's decisions (as presented in the last volume under review, edited by William A. Whitson): "Political considerations can sometimes be allowed to dominate economic ones to the detriment of the latter," but "on the other hand, this proposition needs to be qualified by the important counter-proposition that in times of economic stress, politics may be forced to take a backseat." [4] Unfortunately, this conclusion means that the future course of events in the area of trade is very unpredictable, and that the possibility of Chinese manipulation of foreign trade for political purposes will always be present. This possibility could work in favor of American businessmen, as it has in the recent past—or it could work to their disadvantage.

There is a risk that China's leaders might suddenly act to reduce the level of direct trade with the United States—a decision that might well be related to the question of whether or not the United States extends "most-favored-nation" (MFN) tariff treatment to Chinese exports. A goal of mutually beneficial trade was spelled out in the Shanghai communiqué issued at the conclusion of President Nixon's visit to the PRC in 1972:

Both sides view bilateral trade as another idea from which material benefits can be derived and agree that economic relations based on equality and mutual benefit are in the interests of the peoples of the two countries. They agree to facilitate the progressive development of trade between the two countries.[5]

By 1974, Sino-American trade amounted to almost US$950 million, with US exports accounting for more than 88 percent of the total—*i.e.*, with the Chinese incurring a deficit in the bilateral commodity balance of trade of over US$700 million. Despite this extreme imbalance in favor of the United States, Chinese exports to the US are still subject to very high discriminatory tariff rates due to the absence of a trade agreement with the provision of MFN rights for China.

From the American point of view, the application of the relatively high 1930 Smoot-Hawley tariffs to Chinese exports does not represent special discrimination against China; these same high tariffs are applied to the exports from Communist countries in general. However, the United States has already made an exception in two cases, granting MFN tariff rights to Poland and Yugoslavia, and current legislation permits the US President to grant such rights to other Communist countries. Thus, although a good many important political and economic factors must be carefully weighed in such a decision, it is possible that MFN rights will be extended to China—perhaps even in the near future.

The probable economic consequences of the extension of such rights to the Chinese are a question of considerable importance.

[4] Harold C. Hinton, "Will Politics Govern China's Trade with America?" in Whitson, p. 16.

[5] *The New York Times*, Feb. 28, 1972.

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The second volume under review, *The China Trade and U.S. Tariffs,* is addressed to this question. Noting the somewhat lethargic American response to the availability of Chinese commodities following the relaxation of trade restrictions and the pessimistic forecasts of future trade made by some analysts (including the present writer), Harry Cahill—a senior Foreign Service Officer with the US Department of State—attempts to estimate the potential growth of Chinese exports to the United States if MFN tariffs were applied to those exports. He bases his analysis on detailed data for a large number of commodities which are imported by the United States from other Far Eastern countries and to which the lower MFN tariffs apply. Although he offers no quantitative estimates, his *implicit* conclusion is that there is a large potential for US imports from China but that Peking must get MFN status before this potential can be realized.[6]

There is reason for disagreeing with both the author's methodology and his conclusion. With respect to methodology, no evidence is provided to show that China exports all the commodities analyzed, and in the case of those commodities China does export, no consideration is given to the many constraints on their available supply. Also, no recognition is made of the poor record of Chinese exports to Canada, a country whose consumers can be assumed to have tastes and incomes similar to those in the US and a country which has extended MFN rights to China. Even if one were to accept the data presented by Cahill and assume a supply from China of one-third of the total US imports in these categories (a very heroic assumption indeed), the resulting Chinese exports of such commodities to the United States would amount to only US$150 million. While this estimate may be a fair approximation of the potential *total* of future US imports from China —with or without MFN action— the reviewer cannot accept the implication that the current level of Chinese exports to the United States (about 100 million in 1974) would increase by over 150 percent owing solely to the extension of MFN rights to China.[7]

DESPITE THE existence of real and potential constraints on trade, including the MFN problem, Sino-American commerce has become a reality for both countries. A number of private businessmen and traders in the US have already acquired a good deal of valuable experience in actual negotiations with the representatives of the Chinese state trading companies. Those still without the benefits of this experience, however, find themselves perplexed. Doing business with the Chinese does not appear to follow a well-established pattern, and those who have had some success have benefited from unexpected, unpredictable, and even fortuitous developments, often beyond the control of the would-be trader. In addition, prospective traders frequently receive conflicting advice from those who have been successful in trading with China. For example, they are told, on the one hand, that "American traders must take the initiative" and that "the Chinese cannot or will not come to us, seeking trade"; but on the other hand, they are advised that "they must follow all of the formal procedures prescribed by the PRC," that "if [the Chinese] want you, for whatever reason, they'll have you," and that "all the door-pound-

[6] This conclusion seems obvious because Cahill says the reason for his writing the book is to counterbalance the estimates published by others, like myself, who are pessimistic about the potential growth of China's actual exports to the United States. In addition to the absence of MFN tariff treatment for China, Cahill blames the very slow growth of China's exports to the United States on the poor merchandising practices of US businessmen. Although he faithfully summarizes the method by which my estimates were obtained, he believes my "arithmetic" approach, "based on the scientific method," is too theoretical and involves too many unsupported assumptions. However, when I use the data and arguments presented by Cahill, I arrive at calculations of a volume of exports that lie well within my own and other "pessimistic" estimates. Thus, I must conclude that Cahill views the end product of his own data and arguments not as the potential total of Chinese exports to the US but as the increment that would result solely from the extension of MFN tariffs to Chinese exports.

For my own estimates, see Robert F. Dernberger, "Prospects for Trade between China and the United States," in Alexander Ekstein, Ed., *China Trade Prospects and U.S. Policy,* New York, Praeger Publishers, 1971.

[7] Several quantitative estimates of the possible increase in US imports from China have been or are being prepared within the government and in academic research centers. While I have yet to see a study that approaches the question in an adequate and methodologically sound manner, none indicates that the increase in US imports as a result of the extension of MFN tariff rights to China will be larger than US$ 200 million. There are usually three basic weaknesses in these studies: they fail to consider constraints on Chinese supply, which are very significant; they fail to consider a possible Chinese response to MFN that would increase the price received by the Chinese without a large reduction in the price to the American buyer (a very typical Chinese price strategy); and they fail to estimate the particular nature of US demand for Chinese export commodities, which is relatively inelastic. The US could, of course, increase the imports of Chinese commodities merely by switching its source of a given supply, but this would involve the abandonment of established trading partners for a new and more risky supply source.

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ing in the world . . . will get you nowhere." [8]

Both these quotes come from the Whitson volume, *Doing Business with China,* which is specifically aimed at advising the US businessman and trader on how to conduct commercial transactions with China. Despite such instances of conflicting advice and forecasts, *Doing Business with China* is the best written and edited, most up-to-date, and most informative of the three books that are the subject of this review. Certainly, it is the most relevant for the would-be China trader. Its 35 relatively brief essays are written by a large number of qualified academic experts, representatives of business and government, and experienced international traders. Devoted to a wide range of relevant topics, each essay—with varying degrees of success—treats some aspect of China trade of immediate and practical relevance to the prospective seller or buyer. For example, there are general discussions of China's economy and foreign commerce and of China's trade with various areas of the world to provide a necessary frame of reference or background information; specific analyses of various export industries and sectors generating a demand for imports; summary reviews of the institutions regulating China's foreign trade and of US restrictions on trade with China; a guide to the relevant literature available in English; appendices with lists of China's state-trading and related corporations (as well as their branch offices and representatives in Hong Kong); and lots of tips and words of advice for the would-be China trader. This brief summary of the contents of *Doing Business with China* indicates the wealth of information the book contains, though limits of space preclude any attempt to evaluate the individual discussions. Also these do not yield a general or unifying theme which can be critically analyzed.[9]

THE THREE volumes reviewed here are but recent examples of a number of books devoted to China trade which have appeared over the past decade and can be expected to appear in the foreseeable future. A noticeable, and possibly unavoidable, problem with these books is that each reflects the current state of actual Sino-American trade at the time they were written.[10] *China's Trade with the West* was concerned with arguing for the future possibility of Sino-American trade, since no trade was taking place when it was written. Cahill's concern was that once trade began to take place, transactions were at a low level; in *The China Trade and U.S. Tariffs,* he contended that the growth of commerce was being obstructed by poor American merchandising practices and the lack of MFN tariff rights for China. The essays in *Doing Business with China* were written after some experience in trade with China had been accumulated by US traders but before the large increase in such trade occurred; they attempt to provide the accumulated experience to date, while remaining somewhat cautious about any rapid growth in trade.[11] Thus, given the dynamic changes which have taken place over the past few years in Sino-American trade and the lengthy production lags

[8] Harned Petters Hoose, "How to Negotiate with The Chinese of The PRC," in Whitson, p. 451; and Joseph A. Precker, "China Trade: Fact and Fantasy, Truth and Consequences," in Whitson, p. 494.

[9] With a few exceptions, the individual authors in *Doing Business with China* can be said to agree with the following propositions: the growth in Chinese exports to the US will not be rapid; the already rapid growth in US exports to China will not continue; the remaining US restrictions on trade with China should continue to be removed; there are a great many obstacles facing any US businessman or trader who hopes to initiate trade negotiations with the Chinese. I find nothing in these statements to disagree with, but it would be incorrect to say that these were the major arguments presented in *Doing Business with China.* Quite the contrary: as stated above, the major contribution and purpose of the book is to provide the would-be China trader with as much up-to-date and detailed practical information as possible on a wide variety of topics, with no attempt to force-fit this information into a unifying conclusion or general argument.

[10] The same problem has cropped up in the periodic reports on China's domestic economy published by the Joint Economic Committee of the US Congress. A 1967 report issued by the JEC (*An Economic Profile of Mainland China,* Washington, DC, US Government Printing Office, 2 vols.) reflects a very pessimistic point of view. A 1972 report (*The People's Republic of China: An Economic Assessment,* same publisher) admits it was much less pessimistic due to the advantage of hindsight, claiming there is a tendency to underestimate the growth potential of the Chinese economy in times of disruption and poor performance, and advising caution in periods of favorable reports. Unfortunately, the editor of the 1972 report ignores his own warning. He states: "China has become an economically strong, unified nation—with the . . . capability simultaneously to meet requirements of feeding its population, modernizing its military forces, and expanding its civilian economy base. . . . Thus, China may in the next decade or two join the United States, the Soviet Union, Japan, and the West European community in a pentagon of world powers."

[11] In a postscript added to his essay, Dwight Perkins recognized the large increase in Sino-American trade that was taking place in 1973, but stated that "the analysis in the article is, for the most part, as valid now as when it was first written." In the text of his essay, Perkins wrote: "It is likely to be some time before the United States catches up with the Germans . . . , [and] matching Japan's performance . . . may never be within America's reach." Dwight Perkins, "Is There A China Market?," in Whitson, pp. 51-52.

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in publishing, by the time these books became available to the public, their readers enjoyed a significant advantage of hindsight. Reviewers could also use this advantage—and have—to point out the authors' errors in foresight.

The problem of analyzing developments in Sino-American trade affects everyone who has an interest in the subject, not just the authors of these books. Quite simply, Sino-American trade has not reached a state of steady, normal equilibrium since the removal of US prohibitions, and present and future authors may easily be as misled by current developments as those in the past have been. Having passed through an initial period of unwarranted pessimism because trade did not expand rapidly from the start, analysts seem to show signs of an equally unwarranted sense of optimism because the level of trade rose to US$one billion in 1974.[12] Limits of space do not permit a detailed analysis of the present situation in Sino-American trade or a full explanation of why I believe the present high level of that trade is a temporary phenomenon which will not be sustained in the long run; however, I will mention briefly the major considerations which lead me to this conclusion.

It is possible that the present standstill in the settlement of outstanding problems between the two countries—such as the lack of a trade agreement extending MFN rights for China, the absence of diplomatic recognition at the ambassadorial level, and the issue of unsettled claims—may lead the Chinese to cut back on their economic ties with the United States. But the major reason why I believe that the current volume of trade is a temporary phenomenon and is not likely to continue in the long run is a purely economic reason: the present high level of Sino-American trade creates a serious problem of disequilibrium in China's foreign trade which cannot be solved unless the authorities in Peking either reduce the level of trade *or* make major changes in their domestic and foreign economic policies.

It is not the level of Chinese exports to the United States that presents a problem; most (though not all) previous commentators have agreed that the volume of exports would not grow very fast and would never be very significant—with or without MFN status for Chinese exports. Chinese exports to the United States amounted to US$5 million in 1971, 32 million in 1972, 64 million in 1973, and 115 million in 1974.[13] If this trend should continue,[14] Chinese exports to the United States would amount to US$330.5 million in 1980, which is consistent with the estimates made by myself and other "pessimists."

Nor does the level of *nonagricultural* product exports from the United States to China contradict our earlier expectations. US exports of nonagricultural products to China amounted to none in 1971, US$2 million in 1972, 91.8 million in 1973, and 165 million in 1974. If this trend continues,[15] Chinese imports of nonagricultural products from the United States would amount to US$393.3 million in 1980. Again, this is consistent with the estimates of myself and other "pessimists."

It is only the unexpected Chinese imports of foodstuffs from the United States on a major scale

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[12] My own effort to forecast future Sino-American trade (Robert F. Dernberger, *op. cit.*) was undertaken before the US restrictions on such trade were removed and, therefore, was not based on the then current state of trade; there wasn't any. Selecting 1980 as a target date and projecting probable growth of the domestic Chinese economy, I derived my estimates fundamentally from a somewhat crude comparison of projected demand and supply conditions in both countries in 1980. I do not intend to use this opportunity to defend the estimates I made several years ago. Each of the books reviewed in this article makes reference to my estimates, and in most cases, the references are quite flattering. The estimates, at least those I designated as the most probable set, called for Chinese exports to the United States of US$200 million and US exports to China of US$350 million in 1980. In fairness to myself, it should be pointed out that these estimates were in terms of constant 1965 prices and thus should be revised upward by about 100 percent (*i.e.*, doubled) to account for the probable increase in the US price level during the 1970's. Despite the current level of Sino-American trade and the fact that several observers, including those in government, interpret this development as already proving my estimates wrong, I am still willing to stand by them. I am pleased to be able to make this statement, in light of the fact that over five years have passed since the estimates were made.

[13] Data in these concluding paragraphs are from the *International Trade Handbooks* (Research Aid: PRC Series, issued by the US Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, DC), and from *U.S.-China Business Review* (New York), the magazine of the National Council for US-China Trade.

[14] If one ignores statistical problems involved in the use of current prices in the observed levels of Chinese exports in 1971-74 to project an estimate for Chinese exports to the US in 1980, the trend in the observed data is represented by the equation,

$$y_t = -37.5 + 36.8T$$

y_t = the level of Chinese exports to US in year t, in millions of US dollars; and T = the particular year estimated—1971=1, 1972=2, 1973=3, etc. The coefficient of correlation is 98 percent.

[15] The trend in the observed data is expressed by the equation,

$$y_t = -59.5 + 45.28T$$

y_t = the level of Chinese imports of nonagricultural products from the US in year t, in millions of US dollars; and T = the particular year estimated—1971=1, 1972=2, 1973=3, etc. The coefficient of correlation is 94 percent.

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that has led not only to the very high level of current Sino-American trade but to a feeling of "optimism" in some quarters about the future level of Sino-American trade as well. The "pessimistic" forecasts of potential Sino-American trade erred in not anticipating that China—which constitutes a major agricultural economy, is a significant exporter of agricultural products, and is engaged in a large-scale program of industrialization—would import agricultural products in such a large volume, particularly from the United States. Chinese imports of agricultural products from the US amounted to a negligible amount in 1971, $US58.2 million in 1972 (wheat and corn), 571.9 million in 1973 (wheat, corn, cotton, soybeans and soybean oil), and 656 million in 1974 (wheat, corn, cotton, soybeans and soybean oil).

THERE ARE, however, two major reasons for believing that China will not continue importing agricultural products from the United States for very long, at least on a scale approaching US$one billion:

(1) Even though these imports of agricultural products might in fact have been profitable to China on the basis of some sort of comparative cost calculations, there is no evidence that the Chinese make such calculations; they determine their imports on the basis of what is needed to achieve their domestic goals, not on the basis of what is profitable. What the Chinese need most is producers' goods for their domestic industrialization program. The use of scarce foreign exchange to import agricultural products on a large scale for very long would be an explicit reflection of failure to solve their agricultural problems. If domestic agricultural production is unable to keep pace with domestic needs and should continue to require supplements in the form of large-scale imports from abroad, China's industrialization program would be in serious jeopardy. In this situation, it seems likely that the high cost of China's recent agricultural purchases from the United States will impel the regime to devote major attention and efforts to increasing domestic agricultural production so as to eliminate many of such imports. Certainly, Peking's recent purchases of complete plants, machinery and equipment, and other producers' goods indicate no let up in its industrialization program.[16]

(2) Equally important is the severe problem these recent imports have created in China's balance of payments. In 1971 and 1972, China ran a deficit in commodity trade with the non-Communist developed countries of approximately US$600 million in each year. This import surplus grew by more than US$1 billion in 1973—largely as the result of increased imports of foodstuffs from Canada and the US—and reached almost US$3 billion in 1974. Traditionally, China has covered the import surplus in trade with the non-Communist, industrialized countries by means of the export surplus earned in trade with Southeast Asia (including Hong Kong). This export surplus amounted to US$600 million in 1971, 800 million in 1972, 1,300 million in 1973, and again approximately 1,300 million in 1974. Thus China's balance of trade with Southeast Asia and the industrialized countries of the West showed a Chinese import surplus of over US$300 million in 1973 and well over one billion in 1974.

Although receipts from remittances from overseas Chinese to their relatives in the PRC and items in the service account (receipts from shipping, banking, insurance, tourism, etc.) could possibly cover this import surplus, China's expanding foreign aid program and rapidly growing imports of both agricultural products and producers' goods have put critical pressure on China's scarce earnings and holdings of hard currency. One solution to this problem, of course, would be long-term borrowing from abroad, but this would involve a significant change in China's present attitude toward foreign debt. On the other hand, if imports of agricultural products were reduced, China's potential export earnings and remittances from overseas Chinese would enable China to continue the present trend in imports of producers' goods from the non-Communist, industrialized countries in support of China's program of industrialization. I expect this to happen, resulting specifically—as I have estimated above on the basis of trends through 1974—in a level of Chinese imports from the US of approximately US$400 million, and exports to the US of approximately US$325 million, in 1980. I make no claims to be an expert fortuneteller, but such an outcome would still be consistent with the forecast I made over five years ago.

[16] Between 1970 and 1973, China's total imports of machinery and equipment more than doubled (see *Foreign Trade in Machinery and Equipment*, Research Aid: PRC Series, CIA, January 1965). In the first nine months of 1974, China signed agreements with Western suppliers for over US$800 million worth of complete plants (*U.S.-China Business Review*, November-December 1974, p. 8).

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The Soviet Economy: Reform or Evolution?

By Alan Abouchar

VLADIMIR G. TREML and JOHN P. HARDT, Eds.: *Soviet Economic Statistics*. Durham, North Carolina, Duke University Press, 1972.
LEONARD JOEL KIRSCH: *Soviet Wages: Changes in Structure and Administration since 1956.* Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1972.
MICHAEL ELLMAN: *Planning Problems in the USSR, The Contribution of Mathematical Economics to their Solution, 1960-1971.* New York, Cambridge University Press, 1973 .
JAN AKE DELLENBRANT: *Reformists and Traditionalists, A Study of Soviet Discussions about Economic Reform, 1960-1965.* Stockholm, Raben and Sjogren, 1972.

IN THE VIEW OF many observers of the Soviet economy, the Brezhnev-Kosygin economic reform of the mid-1960's constituted an almost unprecedented episode in Soviet history—a reform alongside which previous attempts to reorganize the economy pale. But a strong case could be made for the view that the measures instituted in 1965 were merely one manifestation of the tendency of the Soviet economy in the post-Stalin era to evolve and adapt in ways that were not as radical or exceptional as those one normally associates with the term "reform."

Support for this evolutionary view emerges from a brief contemplation of the distinctly different economic and political forms that socialism has taken in the last 15 or 20 years in various countries—*e.g.*, Yugoslavia, Chile, and Iraq, to cite just three. Seen against this backdrop of widely varying forms that a socialist economy might adopt, the Soviet economy in 1970 looks pretty much like that of 1960; only the leading players have changed. Furthermore, when we consider the economic measures undertaken in the USSR both before and after the mid-1960's, the 1965 modifications appear as merely part of a long series of organizational experiments rather than as a once-and-for-all change. One might liken them to a mere adjustment of the economic engine rather than a changeover to a different form of energy. Seen in retrospect, Khrushchev's invocation of the territorial principle in 1957 as a means of decentralizing management would seem no less momentous than the measures of 1965. And subsequent experimentation in the USSR likewise seems no less significant. One can draw considerable evidence—most of it, admittedly, inferential—for this alternative view of reform as a process of continuous adaptation rather than as a one-time change from the books under review.

LET US TURN first to the collection, *Soviet Economic Statistics*, edited by Vladimir G. Treml and John P. Hardt. The book is based on papers presented at a Duke University conference on Soviet statistics held in 1969, with several supplemental papers provided on topics not covered at the conference. The contributions survey the gathering and publication of economic statistics in the USSR, as well as the statistics themselves, in a number of important areas: national income (with papers by Abraham S. Becker, Stanley H. Cohn, and Abram Bergson); industry (Rush V. Greenslade, Murray Feshbach, and John H. Moore); agriculture (Eberhard Schinke, Philip M. Raup, and Karl-Eugene Wädekin); personal income and consumption (Gertrude E. Schroeder, Marshall I. Goldman, and Joseph S. Berliner); and prices and money (Morris Bornstein, Raymond P. Powell, and the late Paul Gekker). In each trio, the third contributor presents a discussion and extension of the first two papers. There is also an introductory section concerned with

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a more general appraisal of Soviet policies and practices connected with the compilation of economic statistics, with papers by Holland Hunter, Robert W. Campbell and Michael Kaser.

These papers for the most part discuss the availability and coverage of Soviet statistics, and examine the reliability and consistency of various official series. Several of the contributions merit special mention here. Powell's excellent paper highlights the inadequacy of Soviet financial and monetary statistics, traditionally one of the least-developed statistical inputs for economic analysis. The author himself reconciles many conflicting official series and provides baseline data for others to build on. The study by Becker is also noteworthy, providing one of the best concise descriptions of Soviet national-income accounting procedures in any language. Particularly interesting is his comparison (p. 92) of Soviet data on national income *(natsionalnyi dokhod)* and gross social product *(valovoi obshchestvennyi produkt)* showing that the two indicators have moved very much in parallel over the years.

Most of the other papers are of equally high caliber, and the book will serve as a wellspring of information and guidance for scholars and new students in the fields surveyed for many years. It is to be hoped that the able editors will be encouraged to present a second volume covering Soviet statistical data and practices in such areas as housing and municipal services, public finance and the financial side of the economy more generally (as Gekker urges) and probing more deeply into areas mentioned by Hunter (agriculture, everyday services, and consumption).

But what does this book tell us about the effect of the 1965 "reform" on the Soviet statistical system. The authors of the volume, in fact, have very little specific to say about the question, basically because the reform paid little attention to statistical practices. However, what does emerge from the articles on individual sectors as well as from the three survey pieces is the impression that throughout the post-Stalin period there has been a steady, largely uninterrupted tendency towards greater publication of increasingly detailed economic statistics. Perhaps the best indicator of this stable secular trend is the long tenure of Soviet chief statistician, Minister V. N. Starovsky. Appointed chief of the Central Statistical Administration in 1940, he has, according to Kaser, held ministerial rank longer than anyone else in the present Soviet government.

TURNING NEXT TO Leonard Kirsch's very competent study, *Soviet Wages,* we again find inferential support for an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary view of the postwar development of the Soviet economic system. Kirsch places a major reordering of Soviet wage policies in 1958-60, which he chooses as the bench mark for most of his comparisons (*e.g.,* the shift toward a greater proportion of workers paid on a piece-work basis compared to those paid on a time-rate basis). By contrast, changes in the area of success indicators and market relations occurred some years later (in 1965); changes in the area of integrated national computer systems started still later; and the beginning of exploratory work in the area of enterprise organization was ordered even more recently—all of which suggests a gradual evolutionary pattern of change in Soviet economic life.

Moreover, even the 1958-60 wage "reform" seems to have been more a matter of slightly rearranging the numbers than of introducing new principles. For example, one of the objectives of the wage reform was to reduce the unplanned diversity and inconsistency in wage levels. Yet, in 1971, at the 24th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, still another simplification was announced, involving a reduction of the number of basic wage positions from 400 to 70.[1] Nor has there been much progress in changing another, related aspect of the Soviet wage system which not only contributes to the complexity of the wage structure but also vexes labor-value theorists in the USSR and elsewhere—namely,the practice of incorporating premia in the wages of those working in priority industries. The theoretical problem is that this practice causes a deviation between the labor cost of production as measured by labor reproduction cost, on the one hand, and by the sum of direct and indirect wages, on the other.[2] Despite the reforms of the late 1950's, Soviet wages continue to incorporate sizable differentials attributable solely to the industry involved (rather than the skill level, etc.), as demonstrated by Kirsch in his Appendix A.

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[1] See, for example, A. P. Volkov, "New Conditions of Wage Payments," *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta* (Moscow), June 1973, No. 23, p. 5.

[2] The implications of this problem for price formation are treated in this author's "Wage Bonuses as a Substitute for Interest in the Soviet Union," *Revue de l'Est* (Paris), April 1973, pp. 137-40.

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REGARDING the reform of 1965 itself, Michael Ellman's *Planning Problems in the USSR* begins with a description and analysis of the measures and changes actually introduced in that year. However, the author is primarily concerned with the role played in these events by mathematical economics and economists. Ellman concludes that the contribution of these figures was primarily in the area of fine-tuning rather than retooling.

To cite an example, he approvingly quotes L. V. Kantorovich's defense of the introduction of mathematical methods in Soviet planning as an approach which could achieve savings of 4-5 percent in individual cases, or as little as 0.1 percent annually in whole industries (p. 69). This modest estimate is considerably lower than the 40-50 percent estimate of potential savings usually associated with Kantorovich's name. Nevertheless, it will almost always pay the Soviet leadership to exploit the results of such calculations since the cost will be low.

Concerning the impact of econometrics on the system, one might also argue that the buildup of a large apparatus of practicing economists working as part of the planning process tends to develop an elite group with a vested interest in maintaining and expanding the planning mechanism and thus serves to generate political support for the survival of central planning.

In his wide-ranging Chapter 7, Ellman turns to a discussion of the kind of system that, in his own view, the Soviet Union *should* adopt. This system, which he terms the *"khozraschet* economy" (borrowing a Russian-language term used by the Soviets to connote efficiency and, often, profit-orientation), would encompass a number of features—*e.g.* more exposure of enterprises to market forces, and expansion of the role of banks—which many outside observers, mainly Western economists, deem desirable. This chapter contains many valuable insights, but it is not clear whether its reformist prescriptions provide adequate assurance to the intended Moscow audience that the short-term objectives of the more market-oriented firms can be made compatible with the longer-term objectives of the Soviet economic policymakers.

THE LAST volume reviewed here, Jan Dellenbrant's short study, *Reformists and Traditionalists*, retraces the events leading up to the 1965 reform and the details of its execution. This work, a doctoral dissertation, shows too much faith in the adequacy of steps actually taken to serve as a motor for promoting economic efficiency. The author attempts to enrich our knowledge of the reform by presenting digested versions of the works of prominent Soviet theorists, such as Ye. G. Liberman and V. I. Novozhilov. But many of these writings are difficult to summarize and shades of meaning are lost in the process. For the nuts and bolts, as well as interpretive background on the 1965 reform, the student has many better sources at his disposal, including well-known papers by Robert Campbell, Roger A. Clarke, and Gertrude Schroeder.[3]

In conclusion, the books we have reviewed help us to arrive at a more balanced and comprehensive assessment of the extent of "reform" in the Soviet economy. More particularly, when one compares the present state and recent trends in the economy of the USSR as revealed in these studies with the earlier state and dynamism of that economy or of other socialist economies, the reforms of the mid-1960's appear to fit into a pattern of experimentation and adaptation rather than of violent or sharp change—of evolutionary rather than revolutionary transformation.

[3] See Robert W. Campbell, "Economic Reform in the USSR." *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings* (Menasha, Wisc.), May 1968, pp. 547-58; Roger A. Clarke, "Soviet Agricultural Reforms Since Khrushchev," *Soviet Studies* (Glasgow), October 1969, pp. 159-78; and Gertrude E. Schroeder, "Soviet Economic Reforms: A Study in Contradictions," *ibid.*, July 1968, pp. 1-21, and "Soviet Economic Reform at an Impasse," *Problems of Communism* (Washington, DC), July-August 1971, pp. 36-46.

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Notes & Views

Correspondence

NOTE: Readers are welcome to comment on matters discussed in this journal. Letters should be addressed to the Editors, *Problems of Communism,* US Information Agency, 1776 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20547.

SOVIET SUCCESSION

TO THE EDITORS: Thank you for the very careful and helpful article by Grey Hodnett, "Succession Contingencies in the Soviet Union" (*Problems of Communism,* March-April 1975). I would take issue, however, with one part of the analysis. Mr. Hodnett insists that "Brezhnev was chosen for elevation to First Secretary . . . by his colleagues"; he also refers to the decision of Brezhnev's "peers" (p. 4). This description is contrasted with the claim of Myron Rush that "the new ruler evidently comes to his office not by an orderly transfer of authority but by arrogating power to himself" (Hodnett's footnote 18, p. 4, quoting Rush, *Political Succession in the USSR,* p. 78).

The example of Brezhnev, it seems to me, bears out Rush's analysis rather than Hodnett's. The elevation of Brezhnev to First Secretary was not a decision taken by "the leadership" in response to Khrushchev's ouster. No collegial body met to fill the vacancy created by Khrushchev's demise. On the contrary, the plan for Brezhnev to become First Secretary was part of the plan to overthrow Khrushchev. The post-Khrushchev leadership arrangements had to be made in advance; this was necessary for the success of the coup (and this was the decisive difference between the successful coup of 1964 and the abortive coup attempt of 1957). The elevation of Brezhnev was announced simultaneously with the overthrow of Khrushchev. Mr. Hodnett cannot argue that Brezhnev was chosen by his colleagues unless he argues that Khrushchev was overthrown by those same colleagues. Since we must assume that Khrushchev was deposed by a handful of conspirators rather than by his "colleagues" (at least as that term is normally used), we must conclude that the transfer of office from Khrushchev to Brezhnev was stage-managed from beginning to end by a small *and self-selected* part of the leadership. This is why the succession appeared so "struggle-free" (p. 5). Most of Brezhnev's "peers" learned of his elevation to First Secretary only when they learned of Khrushchev's removal. The decision for most of these peers was not whether to "choose" Brezhnev as First Secretary but whether to acquiesce in the *fait accompli* whereby Brezhnev claimed that office.

Mr. Hodnett is quite right to point out that a potential leader of the Soviet Union is likely to have certain characteristics that render him tolerable to other important people. But this is not the same thing as saying that the others "choose" the leader. To make such a claim is to trivialize the very idea of "choice."

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MR. HODNETT REPLIES: Mr. Baras raises a number of important and interrelated issues in his thoughtful comments on my article—some factual, some conceptual, and others more narrowly "semantic." He and I would seem to agree on a number of points: the plan for Brezhnev to move into the First Secretaryship *was* part of the plan to oust Khrushchev; there *was* unquestionably a conspiratorial dimension to the process; and there *had* to be some initiative for the move, coming from what at the beginning was in all likelihood a small number of individuals. Nor do I disagree with his statement that "Mr. Hodnett cannot argue that Brezhnev was chosen by his colleagues unless he argues that Khrushchev was overthrown by those same colleagues"; indeed, with some qualification this is precisely the thrust of my argument. Where the difference of opinion appears to lie is over the degree and modalities of engagement in the succession of members of the leadership other than Brezhnev.

To the terms "choice" and "decision," which he rejects as inappropriate, Mr. Baras counterposes the term "coup." In using these words, what I had in mind was not

CORRECTION

In Kenneth Lieberthal's article, "The Internal Political Scene," in the section "China in 1975" (*Problems of Communism,* May-June 1975), the last complete sentence in the second column on p. 9 should read: "If this was in fact the case, it suggests at a minimum that the party Chairman is no longer in close control of events in Peking." The word "close" was inadvertently omitted.

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simply a behavioral deed, a simultaneous display of will by members of the leadership at some point in time, but a cognitive process phased over time—one that involved an ongoing imaginative consideration of alternative courses of action, with varying degrees of self-revelatory interaction among leaders, culminating in an overt resolution of the issue that was subject to collective approval *or* disapproval, and was in accord with the desire of a majority of members of the party Presidium. The emphasis here was upon the widespread disenchantment with Khrushchev among leaders and elite sectors generated *over time* by policy failures and Khrushchev's responses to these failures, the opportunity of all members of the leadership to form a political judgment of Brezhnev and other conceivable candidates for the First Secretaryship, and the capacity of all members of the leadership to express their minds about removing Khrushchev and promoting Brezhnev without fear for their own physical well-being. Such a conception is perfectly compatible, in my estimation, with a recognition of staggered "boarding" times, self-generated initiatives, clique activity, personal ambition, conspiratorial maneuver, and the constraining of options—all of which were clearly present in 1964. If Mr. Baras thinks that "choice" and "decision" are not compatible with these phenomena, or that a definition of these terms should put more stress on formally-structured equal participation by all leaders in all aspects of the succession process, without *political* risk, that is naturally his privilege.

For my part, I find the term "coup" very difficult to defend as a serious analytic concept in the context at hand. We should be leery, I think, of a term that so patently serves the function —through its emotive connotations of suddenness, unexpectedness, secretiveness, willfulness, and coerciveness —of saving an interpretation of Soviet elite politics from the reconsideration so insistently prompted by the awkward fact of Khrushchev's removal in October 1964. A "coup," as I understand the term, involves (1) a thrust from below for political power, with or without the participation and guidance of individual top leaders, but against the incumbent leadership; (2) the use or threatened use of physical violence against opponents; (3) the forestalling of political resistance to the changes demanded. None of these conditions held in the Khrushchev succession.

As far as one can determine, the impetus actually to move against Khrushchev and promote Brezhnev and Kosygin came from within the top leadership itself, not from lower levels in the party apparatus, police or military, and was directed not at the incumbent leadership but at Khrushchev personally. The lead actors, apart from Brezhnev, were not the supporting cast of Shelepin, Malinovsky, Semichastny, Mironov or still lower figures (loyal "Brezhnevites" all?) but (yes) Khrushchev's colleagues and Brezhnev's peers —Suslov, Kosygin, Kirilenko and Poliansky. There was no way for Brezhnev to "seize power" without the support of these individuals who, with Brezhnev added, constituted not a "handful" or a "small . . . part" but fully half of the leadership, if the ailing Kozlov is excluded. The police and the military, when asked, played a facilitating rather than demanding role; neither they nor other unspecified elements took it upon themselves to catapult Brezhnev to power, or to pressure Suslov and Kosygin on Brezhnev's behalf.

As I see it (and this is where Mr. Baras would appear to read the evidence quite differently), the activist core was confronted all along with the unavoidable prospect of *proposing* the removal of Khrushchev and the accession of Brezhnev and Kosygin to the party Presidium, and of then going forward to the Central Committee either with or without sufficient solidarity to close off a possible counterattack. Thus, the *strategic* achievement in the mechanics of getting rid of Khrushchev and elevating Brezhnev was not that of assuring the benevolent neutrality or assistance of the military and secret police (this was of tactical importance), but that of bringing on board as many of the remaining Presidium members as possible (Shvernik, Voronov, Mikoyan and Podgorny) before the Central Committee meeting. The Presidium did meet; a majority of members must have agreed to support the proposal for change; and the leadership appears to have presented a common front to the Central Committee meeting at which Khrushchev was condemned. How did this come to pass? —this is the question which the "coup" theory persistently avoids.

Is there any evidence that those leaders who may have been inclined to defend Khrushchev (especially Podgorny and Mikoyan) were deterred by threats of physical reprisal? Or was it, perhaps, Brezhnev's talents as a confidence artist that produced the majority support? If neither of these questions can be answered affirmatively, then the likeliest scenario is one in which one or more of the four remaining members considered the options and made up his mind to vote against Khrushchev and for Brezhnev. Obviously, constraints *were* built into this situation: the linking of the removal and appointment decisions; the necessity of responding to a slate of candidates already proposed; possible "vibrations" of support in extra-leadership power structures (military, police, party apparatus); and—most importantly—the implicit threat posed to those on the losing side of deprivation of high office. Do these constraints mean, however, that for Shvernik, Voronov, Mikoyan, and Podgorny there was no "choice"; that they did not "decide"? And do the constraints justify the appellation "coup"? I think not.

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